

# Climate First!



## ANNUAL REPORT 2025

### Climate First!, Inc.

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# A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As in previous years, the science regarding the health of the climate wasn't good at the start of 2025. A report from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), released in January, verified that 2024 was about 1.55 degrees C above the average temperature in pre-industrial times, and alarmingly was the warmest year on record. The assessment came with a caveat—the strong El Niño could be blamed for some of the record degrees. Critically, the WMO Secretary-General stated that one of the main goals of the 2015 Paris Accords --"limit the temperature increase to 1.5° C"-- was still attainable, but not without strong efforts.

With the release of the dire WMO assessment, there could not have been a worse event to soon follow than Donald Trump becoming the nation's president. He had been calling climate change a "hoax" for years, and in his second campaign for the presidency, he often stated that 'Drill, baby, drill' was coming if he won. Upon entering office, Trump engaged in many actions that would increase fossil fuel use, including signing an executive order that would lead to the U.S. withdrawing from the Paris Accords.

Seemingly due to Trump's abandoning of laws, regulations, and other commitments to addressing climate change, corporations, including the media, began moving away from the issue. Also, Democratic politicians were advised to not use certain phrases related to climate change. Even everyday Americans seemed to talk less about the issue. More broadly, when the administration increasingly engaged in authoritarian actions as the year progressed, activists began mobilizing against the federal government's unprecedented behavior. Soon there were protests occurring all over the country, that on their face, had little to do with the climate. Climate First! was involved in some of the events because we understood that an autocratic country would have little interest in addressing the climate crisis.

Of course, many groups continued to work to save the climate. Rainforest Action Network and others released in June of 2025 their annual Fossil Fuel Finance Report. It gave a thorough review of how 65 major banks were doing in their lending and underwriting to over 2,700 fossil fuel companies. And its conclusions were terrible. Despite assertions by scientists at the International Energy Agency and elsewhere that there should be no new fossil fuel expansion, many large banks had been increasing their financing of these expansions. Also, the number of lenders that backtracked on (or even got rid of) their pledges regarding fossil fuels continued to increase.

During 2025, Climate First! remained committed to the climate. We continued working on the “[Costco: Clean Up Your Credit Card](#)” campaign, an effort to encourage the popular retailer to replace its Citibank credit card if the lender didn’t start cutting its massive funding of climate-wrecking fossil fuels. We petitioned at a Costco Warehouse twice, among other things. Critically, since the campaign was launched in 2023, there has been limited success. Organizers have met with Costco's management about Citi's fossil fuel investments. Following that, the retailer's leadership met with their counterparts at the bank. Unfortunately, activists never learned how that second meeting went.

Climate First! got involved in a new effort during 2025—the [Wells Fargo campaign](#). The campaign was created because the [bank had engaged in bad behavior in recent years](#): dropping its climate targets in 2025; engaging in union busting; encouraging the privatization of the USPS; dropping its commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion; among other things. Regarding Wells Fargo’s abandoning its climate objectives, one of the campaign’s major goals was to punish the lender for doing so in order to discourage other major banks from following suit. A key project in the campaign involved an effort to [unionize Wells Fargo](#), which we worked on during the year.

Besides its bank campaign work during 2025, Climate First! also tabled at two local festivals, spreading the word about its work regarding the major banks, as well as and sustainable/ethical banking. In addition, its E. Wayne Ave cleanup team performed six road cleanups as part of Montgomery County, Maryland’s [Adopt A Road program](#).

Looking at Climate First!’s financial situation in 2025, we received two modest grants due to a Board member’s work. Those monies, along with the generous donations we got during two fundraisers that Climate First! held near the end of the year, brought some financial stability to the nonprofit.

In close, I thank our dedicated volunteers, donors, and Board of Directors for a busy year of climate actions and events. I believe that Climate First!, in partnership with other groups, made some crucial progress in 2025.

Ted Conwell  
Executive Director

# MEASURABLES FROM 2025

During the year, Climate First! activists:

- organized a virtual meeting in January to review the nonprofit's campaign strategies, a necessary action due to an incoming U.S. president who called climate change a "hoax".
- held Climate First!'s 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in March, which 13 people attended virtually. An aide from a U.S. Senator's office gave a good talk about polluters pay legislation.
- participated in the "Hands Off!" rally at the Washington Monument in Wash., DC, in early April. The "push back" to the Trump Administration had finally begun.
- delivered a letter in June to a local L.L.Bean store, a company that uses a Citibank credit card. Activists asked L.L.Bean to encourage Citibank to reduce its climate pollution.
- attended a "No Kings" rally in mid-June while vacationing in Cape Cod, MA. Activists felt that if an oligarchy was running the country, the climate crisis would get no attention.
- ran a "bank walk" in Wash., DC in August during a "National Day of Action on Wells Fargo." 10 activists rallied at the first WF branch, with fewer people at the next two.
- participated in a "Petrostate Tour" in mid-September which included rallies at three firms in Washington, DC that lobby for fossil fuels, and a LNG energy company in VA.
- met with employees at seven Wells Fargo branches in September and October, as part of a unionizing project in the Wells Fargo campaign.
- attended a second No Kings protest, this time in Washington, DC in mid-October. It was one of over 2,700 No Kings events in all 50 states on that day.
- petitioned at a Costco Warehouse in Maryland twice in November. In total, they collected 35 signatures for the [Costco petition](#), and handed out 101 fliers.
- tabled at two festivals, one in April and the other in September, both in Montgomery County, Maryland.
- organized six clean-ups of a segment of E. Wayne Avenue during the year, as part of Montgomery County's Adopt A Road program.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

## MARCH

Climate First! held a virtual 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in early March. [Alex Swanson](#), who covered energy, environment, and climate issues for U.S. Senator, Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), gave a talk about the Senator’s [newly reintroduced Polluters Pay Climate Fund Act](#). While the federal bill hadn’t yet passed out of committee, similar polluters pay legislation became law in 2024 in Vermont and New York State, with ten other states introducing bills in 2025.



*Ted Conwell, Director of Climate First!, giving a talk at the meeting (3-2-25).*

## APRIL

In early April, Climate First! attended the “Hands Off!” rally at the Washington Monument in the nation’s capital. It was one of nearly 1,300 such events around the country on that day. And there was at least one protest in all 50 states. Critically, Hands Off! seemed to be the largest organized event to date, opposing the new Trump administration’s extreme policies and actions.

*Many of the signs at the Hands Off! event in DC were quite clever (AP Photo--Jose Luis Magana) (4-5-25).*





*This activist felt inspired for days after the DC event where roughly 100,000 people had showed up (4-5-25).*

## JUNE

On their first full day of vacation in Cape Cod in mid-June, Climate First!’s director and his wife rode bikes to a “No Kings” protest on the Falmouth village green. Despite the rain, the event was well attended. It was one of over 2000 such events that day in the U.S. (and beyond), all part of the No Kings Mass Protest. The push back to the Trump administration’s extremism was continuing.



*Got to protect this nice sign from the rain! (6-14-25).*

We escaped some of the rain for a bit on the steps of a church across the street from the Green, where, appropriately, Paul Revere, an American Revolutionary patriot, had made its bell (6-14-25).



## AUGUST



In mid-August, during a “National Day of Action on Wells Fargo”, Climate First! organized a “bank walk” that was comprised of back-to-back petition deliveries, followed by rallies, at three branches of the bank in Washington, DC. The Day of Action was, among other things, attempting to punish Wells Fargo for dropping its climate targets earlier in the year.

(8-15-25).

Ralliers at each Wells Fargo branch chanted, sang, and handed-out leaflets to passersby, while the petition team was off to the next branch to meet with its manager. Each branch manager agreed to send the petition “up the chain”.



(8-15-25)

# SEPTEMBER

The Takoma Park Folk Festival was a usual “stop” for Climate First! in 2025 as it has been tabling at the iconic event for numerous years.



(9-7-25)



(9-7-25)

At these annual festivals, our enthusiastic volunteers share with passersby our work which primarily calls-out the climate-polluting major U.S. banks, while also promoting sustainable banking.

Also in September, Climate First! participated in a “Petrostate Tour” organized by Third Act, in Washington, DC. The event included rallies planned at four stops during the day: American Gas Association, Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, American Petroleum Institute, and Venture Global LNG, Inc. The work of the three associations and Venture Global showed that the United States was moving towards being a petrostate.



The first stop was the American Gas Association (9-19-25).



*We are marching in the street, and getting close to the American Petroleum Institute (9-19-25).*



*Boarding the bus for Virginia (9-19-25).*

After a rally at the [American Petroleum Institute](#)—one of the powerful trade associations, if not the most powerful one, for the U.S. oil and natural gas industry—we boarded a double-decker bus bound for the final stop in Arlington, VA at the headquarters of Venture Global LNG.



*A rally has started at Venture Global (9-19-25).*

## OCTOBER

During one of the largest single days of protests in American history, two Climate First! activists participated in a “No Kings” rally in Washington, DC on October 18, 2025. Including the estimated 200,000 people at the DC event, over seven million people attended the No Kings Mass Protest on October 18, 2025. And reportedly there were over 2,700 events in all 50 states.

The event in Washington, DC was one of the most unique protests that this writer has ever been involved in due to: the clever signs; protesters wearing unusual costumes representing animals,



*When arriving at the back end of No Kings rally in DC, this was the view (10-18-25).*

President Trump, the Statue of Liberty, and others; a dance at the end of the rally that the writer and his wife attended; the children at the protest, including some in baby carriages; and numerous other special things. Probably the most jaw-dropping sighting was a protester walking along on stilts.



*Two Climate First! activists spread the word (10-18-25).*



*A view from the outdoor stairs of Canadian Embassy (10-8-25).*



*The Trump administration's outrageous immigration policies and actions are compromising the Statue of Liberty (10-18-25).*

*Would the National Guard troops in Washington, DC arrest these colorful protesters? (10-18-25).*



*A protester on stilts! (10-18-25).*

## NOVEMBER

Climate First! continued its long-standing work in the [“Costco—Cleanup Your Credit Card” campaign](#) in mid-November by canvassing at a Costco Warehouse two straight weekends. By getting its customers (and “potential customers”) to sign a [petition](#) that called on Costco to drop Citibank as its credit card partner – if the major bank didn’t end its massive climate-polluting ways – the campaign uses the leverage of one of the [most popular retailers in the U.S.](#) to help address the climate crisis.

*This successful petitioning event was over (11-16-25).*



## LOOKING AHEAD

As far as Climate First!’s bank campaigns, we will continue our work on the “[Costco—Cleanup Your Credit Card](#)” campaign. While the meetings between activists and Costco management, and Costco and Citi’s top supervisors, didn’t get the bank to reduce its massive investments in climate-wrecking fossil fuels, there still is hope. Campaign organizers will soon release a formal report regarding how large companies (like Costco) can find credit card providers (i.e., banks) that are climate-friendly, and are also able to manage their large number of customers. Activists believe that the report may cause Costco to seriously consider getting a new bank to manage its credit card.

Climate First! will also keep working on the “[Wells Fargo: Be a Better Bank](#)” campaign, an effort to punish the bank for dropping its climate protection commitments in early 2025, as well as engaging in other [harmful actions](#). In addition to the naming and shaming aspect of the campaign, we are engaged with a unionization project, an effort to encourage workers at Wells Fargo branches around the country to join a [union](#). Excitingly, there are now [29 Wells Fargo branches in the union](#). This campaign is critical to convincing other banks **not to follow** Wells Fargo in eliminating their climate targets.

In our campaign work, we will also keep spreading the word about [sustainable/ethical banking](#). In addition, we will continue to fight the [growing authoritarianism in the U.S.](#) administration because it has proved that they have no intention of addressing the climate crisis.

Climate First! is at the early stage of working on getting [polluters pay legislation](#) passed in Maryland. Polluters pay laws make fossil fuel companies help pay for damages resulting from climate-amplified natural disasters, ensuring local and state governments, as well as taxpayers, won't have to pay for all the damages. Rather, fossil fuel companies, which [as early as 1954 knew what their products could do to the climate](#), would finally have to pay for the harm that fossil fuels had caused. [New York State and Vermont have passed polluters pay legislation; efforts are now underway](#) in numerous other states. Not surprisingly, the fossil fuel companies are now fighting against the legislation by lobbying for [legal immunity from climate liability laws](#). We will also fight any effort to give immunity.

In closing, as was mentioned in last year’s Annual Report, we will always keep the following thought at the forefront of our minds in our climate work: “[Climate action is not a binary pass-fail test](#). Every fraction of a degree of warming that we prevent will reduce human suffering and death, and keep more of the planet’s natural systems intact.” Thus, climate activists can still do crucial work even if they only achieve limited success in their campaigns.

## **EXPRESSING GRATITUDE**

Climate First! expresses its sincere gratitude to the following: its Board of Directors, which set the direction for the nonprofit over the past year, while individual Board members worked on various critical projects; its staff and numerous volunteers who gave innumerable hours to the organization during a busy 2025; and its financial supporters, whose generous donations permitted Climate First! to continue its work trying to help save the Earth's climate.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS – December 31, 2025**

Ted Conwell, President & Secretary (MD)

Sasan Dehghan, Treasurer (Washington, DC)

Fred Krimgold, Vice President (NY)

Alex Lugo (MD)

**Climate First! strives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean energy, by organizing grassroots efforts that encourage corporations and local governments to think climate first and take concrete steps to help sustain climate stability.**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Climate First!, Inc.

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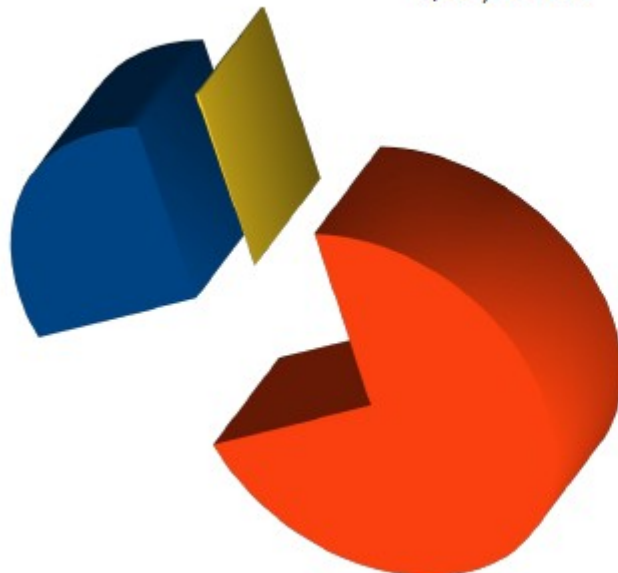
@Climate1stUSA

Climate First! is a nonprofit, tax exempt 501 (c)(3) corporation.  
Annual Report prepared by Climate First!, Inc.; February 10, 2026.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Income 2025

\$12,259.00



- Income from Donations  
\$3,518.29
- Income from Grants  
\$8,710.71
- Income from Item Sales  
\$30.00

Expenses 2025

\$6,108.49



- Total Operations Costs  
\$5,658.75
- Program Costs  
\$449.74

# Climate First!

	12/31/2013	12/31/2014	12/31/2015
<b>Operations Statement</b>			
Income from Donations	2,851.80	4190.00	7,596.00
Income from Grants			500.00
Income from Item Sales	<u>430.00</u>	<u>90.00</u>	<u>80.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,281.80</b>	<b>4280.00</b>	<b>8,176.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Operations</b>			
Cost of Items	491.40	0.00	70.20
Registrations (IRS, Reg Agent, MD)	1,017.00	189.00	189.00
Memberships	100.00	227.00	118.00
Outreach incl Web	385.00	135.85	306.78
Professional Fees	0.00	310.00	265.00
Other Operating Costs	280.85	378.16	1,824.45
<b>Total Operations Costs</b>	<b>2,274.25</b>	<b>1,240.01</b>	<b>2,773.43</b>
Programs	575.15	1377.34	2,251.11
Fund-Raising Commissions			777.50
Fines and Penalties			100.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>2,849.40</u></b>	<b><u>2,617.35</u></b>	<b><u>5,902.04</u></b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>432.40</u></b>	<b><u>1,662.65</u></b>	<b><u>2,273.96</u></b>
Beginning Fund Balance	0.00	432.40	2,095.05
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>432.40</u></b>	<b><u>1,662.65</u></b>	<b><u>2,273.96</u></b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance</b>	<b><u>432.40</u></b>	<b><u>2,095.05</u></b>	<b><u>4,369.01</u></b>

# Climate First!

	12/31/2016	12/31/2017	12/31/2018
<b>Operations Statement</b>			
Income from Donations	8,408.00	7,313.78	10,491.86
Income from Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00
Income from Item Sales	<u>50.00</u>	<u>40.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>8,458.00</b>	<b>7,353.78</b>	<b>10,491.86</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Operations</b>			
Cost of Items	35.10	28.08	0.00
Registrations (IRS, Reg Agent, MD)	243.04	224.23	189.00
Memberships	100.00	95.00	100.00
Outreach incl Web	474.94	1,955.87	567.44
Professional Fees	330.00	231.00	280.00
Other Operating Costs	2,510.90	6,134.50	4,753.54
<b>Total Operations Costs</b>	<b>3,693.98</b>	<b>8,668.68</b>	<b>5,889.98</b>
Programs	737.27	1,579.13	836.84
Fund-Raising Commissions	1,101.78	0.00	0.00
Fines and Penalties	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>5,533.03</u></b>	<b><u>10,247.81</u></b>	<b><u>6,726.82</u></b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>2,924.97</u></b>	<b><u>-2,894.03</u></b>	<b><u>3,765.04</u></b>
Beginning Fund Balance	4,369.01	7,293.98	4,399.95
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>2,924.97</u></b>	<b><u>-2,894.03</u></b>	<b><u>3,765.04</u></b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance</b>	<b><u>7,293.98</u></b>	<b><u>4,399.95</u></b>	<b><u>8,164.99</u></b>

# Climate First!

	12/31/2019	12/31/2020	12/31/2021
<b>Operations Statement</b>			
Income from Donations	3,520.33	4,719.44	6,779.10
Income from Grants	0.00	1,415.00	4,015.00
Income from Item Sales	<u>133.00</u>	<u>10.00</u>	<u>70.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,653.33</b>	<b>6,144.44</b>	<b>10,864.10</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Operations</b>			
Cost of Items	0.00	7.02	49.14
Registrations (IRS, Reg Agent, MD)	299.00	199.00	199.00
Memberships	0.00	100.00	100.00
Outreach incl Web	494.81	493.84	841.85
Professional Fees	280.00	280.00	280.00
Other Operating Costs	5,496.85	4,696.66	3,419.64
<b>Total Operations Costs</b>	<b>6,570.66</b>	<b>5,776.52</b>	<b>4,889.63</b>
<b>Programs</b>	<b>887.34</b>	<b>149.53</b>	<b>2,846.13</b>
Fund-Raising Commissions	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fines and Penalties	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>7,458.00</u></b>	<b><u>5,926.05</u></b>	<b><u>7,735.76</u></b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u><u>-3,804.67</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>218.39</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>3,128.34</u></u></b>
<b>Beginning Fund Balance</b>	<b>8,164.99</b>	<b>4,360.32</b>	<b>4,578.71</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u><u>-3,804.67</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>218.39</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>3,128.34</u></u></b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance</b>	<b><u><u>4,360.32</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>4,578.71</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>7,707.05</u></u></b>

# Climate First!

	12/31/2022	12/31/2023	12/31/2024
<b>Operations Statement</b>			
Income from Donations	2,158.72	2,513.94	4,777.10
Income from Grants	7,000.00	0.00	0.00
Income from Item Sales	<u>48.00</u>	<u>10.00</u>	<u>30.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>9,206.72</b>	<b>2,523.94</b>	<b>4,807.10</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Operations</b>			
Cost of Items	35.10	7.02	22.49
Registrations (IRS, Reg Agent, MD)	245.00	220.00	220.00
Memberships	100.00	100.00	0.00
Outreach incl Web	563.06	773.49	647.06
Professional Fees	377.50	350.00	350.00
Other Operating Costs	4,411.80	5,464.63	1,782.85
<b>Total Operations Costs</b>	<b>5,732.46</b>	<b>6,915.14</b>	<b>3,022.40</b>
<b>Programs</b>	<b>2,358.21</b>	<b>2,616.06</b>	<b>1,284.39</b>
Fund-Raising Commissions	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fines and Penalties	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>8,090.67</u></b>	<b><u>9,531.20</u></b>	<b><u>4,306.79</u></b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>1,116.05</u></b>	<b><u>-7,007.26</u></b>	<b><u>500.31</u></b>
<b>Beginning Fund Balance</b>	<b>7,707.05</b>	<b>8,823.10</b>	<b>1,815.84</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>1,116.05</u></b>	<b><u>-7,007.26</u></b>	<b><u>500.31</u></b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance</b>	<b><u>8,823.10</u></b>	<b><u>1,815.84</u></b>	<b><u>2,316.15</u></b>

# Climate First!

12/31/2025

## Operations Statement

Income from Donations	3,518.29
Income from Grants	8,710.71
Income from Item Sales	<u>30.00</u>

Total Income	12,259.00
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## Expenses

Operations	
Cost of Items	33.80
Registrations (IRS, Reg Agent, MD)	220.00
Memberships	55.00
Outreach incl Web	661.17
Professional Fees	350.00
Other Operating Costs	4,338.78

Total Operations Costs	5,658.75
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Programs	449.74
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Fund-Raising Commissions	0.00
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Fines and Penalties	0.00
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Total Expenses	<u>6,108.49</u>
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Net Income	<u><u>6,150.51</u></u>
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Beginning Fund Balance	2,316.15
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Net Income	<u>6,150.51</u>
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Ending Fund Balance	<u><u>8,466.66</u></u>
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