      Dear Mr. Boyd,

      I am a 14-year-old student from Miami, Florida. Because my city sits on the ocean, I am already living the climate impacts on ocean health.  My city has 2.4 million people living at less than 4 feet about the high tide line. It is built on porous limestone. 90,000 of our septic tanks sit at 2 feet above sea level and 2/3rds leak when they are flooded. Our main water source, [the Biscayne Aquifer](https://www.constructiondive.com/news/is-development-draining-the-fl-aquifer-system-beyond-repair/448474/), is already taxed by our growing population, and the pandemic's stay-at-home orders have only increased our water usage.  Already, during King Tides and storms, our streets flood 30 days a year, and unbelievably, they are [expected to flood every day by the year 2070.](https://www.inverse.com/article/46169-florida-miami-housing-climate-change-report)  As the flooding drains off our city streets, it pulls the pollution of the streets back into the ocean, [contaminating](https://www.local10.com/news/local/2020/09/10/construction-site-sediment-dumped-into-drains-contributing-to-biscayne-bay-problems/) our clean water supply. Because of those facts, my city, once known as the magic city, is now known as ground zero for sea-level rise.  And as the seas rise, the social divide deepens. [Miami is the infamous home to the richest and poorest zip codes in the country.](https://capitalandmain.com/richest-poorest-miami-zip-codes-0923)  The developers, having covered almost every inch of our beautiful coast with concrete, are now moving inland to higher ground,  escalating higher prices in those areas, and forcing migration out of long time-minority groups.

     In Miami, I spend my free time on the ocean. I row crew and fish during the school year. I spend a lot of time in the nearby Bahamas, where I snorkel, free dive, and scuba dive.  But the life I have now is changing. It is not just threatened, it is not just at risk. It is already happening.

     In 2017 Miami was hit by one of the most intense hurricanes ever, Hurricane Irma. The water came up over the sea walls and flooded my backyard. The ocean was so powerful it washed a boat onto my school football field. The power outages closed my school for 2 weeks. But the floods didn’t stop at a few feet inland like they used to. This time our city flooded all the way out to the airport which sits in west Miami. Our entire city was underwater. The photos are unbelievable. But they are real. Last year, Hurricane  Dorian destroyed my Bahamas. The death count is estimated at over 300, but the press coverage stopped soon after because the Bahamas isn't exactly a huge contributor to the world GDP. We headed to help and they turned us back because of the potential of disease from decaying bodies.

    Due to climate change, more intense hurricanes are expected. As sea levels rise, myself and 2.4 million other Miami residents will have to move. My home and my school sit on the edge of Biscayne Bay, and both will be uninhabitable by the year 2050. My school has been in its current location for 100 years. My dad went to school on the same campus I do. If I ever have kids, mine won’t, due to climate change.

    So I find myself, at 14, a climate activist. I would not have chosen this. By necessity, not choice, I started a climate group in Miami called [We Are Forces of Nature](https://www.weareforcesofnature.org), to help stop climate change.  But I am not just an activist. I am an optimist. The problem already exists-I am living it. But the solutions already exist too. Some of the solutions are even profitable. And the solutions will make our lives better. I am 14. During my free time, I now find myself writing my politicians, planning climate strikes, and planning the 2021 youth climate summit. It s interesting work, and I have met some amazing people. But I miss the Bahamas. We’ve all just got to do something.

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