



Florida students are sick of inaction. The state of Florida is ground zero for climate catastrophes, and we are in dire need of bold leadership to support and protect our people from losing the very place we call home. While way too many adult Floridians continue to sit idle on this issue, the youth of Florida are confronting the reality of their future: Is it safe to raise a family, or even live here myself? What will my neighborhood look like in 10 years? 20 years? We, the youth, find it unjust and unconstitutional for leaders to have the audacity to continue beating around the (climate crisis) bush. Although feasible solutions exist, our elected officials continue to vote on policies that will further contribute to the problem. We demand action. It is now or never.

The CLEO Institute is dedicated to making a difference for the planet and its people. It is the largest non-profit organization in the state of Florida that is exclusively dedicated to climate crisis education and advocacy. Founded in 2010, The CLEO Institute works with communities across Florida to build climate literacy and mobilize climate action for a just and resilient future.

Our GenCLEO youth advocacy group is composed of hundreds of diverse students coming together to advocate for environmental justice in Florida, one of the most vulnerable areas in the United States. Through the GenCLEO program, students in middle school, high school, and university learn about the latest climate science from reputable and vetted sources. This increases members' advocacy and communication skills through training and civic engagement opportunities.

Florida is facing severe climate impacts, such as devastating damage from extreme weather, sea level rise, extreme heat, food/water/health vulnerability, as well as decreasing wildlife and biodiversity. Despite these threats that demand urgent and

bold climate action, our leadership is ignoring the people's interests in favor of profit and power.

When it comes to Florida, the impacts of climate change are not statistics on a headline; they are life-threatening disruptions that will only increase over time. The lack of climate action on the national, state, and local levels has endangered millions of lives. The sea-level rise challenges in Miami are not just surface level, but deep-rooted, as Miami is built on porous limestone rock. Here, residents run the risk of driving in 1-to-3-foot-deep pools of water during rainy or high tides seasons, and that level is predicted to rise dramatically. Families are threatened by air pollution, and community inequities are exacerbated as a result of the climate crisis. The livelihood of farmworkers throughout the state is threatened by extreme heat and saltwater intrusion, and increased development of cities is threatening our biodiversity.

Many of us local youth activists dream of growing old in our Florida hometowns, but realistically speaking, once we weigh all the facts, we very well could be saying goodbye to our home before we even reach middle age. Climate change hits personal here, especially when your family members' higher-ground home lots are being scoped out by developers seeking to build on the historically black and brown communities of Miami that are less vulnerable to sea level rise.

Enough is enough. The Conference of Youth is one of the most important climate events of our generation. We hold the responsibility to protect our environment and take action against the consequences of a rapidly changing climate. It is up to us to speak up and speak out in order to see real change. This is why we respectfully demand that you honorable leaders protect, serve, and stand for us. Truly follow the ideals set by the constitution to keep all citizens of the United States and future generations safe.

The state of Florida's Governor must act in the public's interest for the social, economic, and environmental viability of our state.

By 2050, the **Floridian energy grid** must transition to 100% renewable energy. Through adapting the power grid to a projected energy mix derived by data from Stanford University--11.2% residential rooftop solar, 50% solar plants, 10% concentrating solar plants, 5% onshore wind, 14.9% offshore wind, 7.8% commercial and government rooftop solar, and 1% wave devices-- Florida will ensure the safety of its constituents and the economy. The estimated 40-year **jobs to be created** from the outlined energy mix include 222,082 construction jobs and 90,727 operation jobs. Moreover, for individuals, an approximate \$5,207 in energy, health, and climate cost savings would be gained per person. At the core of transitioning the power grid to renewable sources must lie the goal of empowering communities. Therefore, the Public Service Commissions should increasingly voice and vote for matters pertaining to clean energy and climate change resilience.

While driving transitions in energy systems, it is imperative that **low-income households** be supported in converting to clean energy to prevent further disparagement. In order to ensure an equitable transition, federal tax credits and utility rebates that residents can receive for embracing weather-proofing measures and investing in more environmentally friendly products must be expanded..

The current state of **transportation** in Florida is unreliable and inaccessible. Currently, the statewide bus system is underfunded resulting in broken trust between riders and the transit system sourced from a lack of organization and reliability. There must be an increased investment on the state level within the next five years to increase the ease and accessibility to public transportation, in turn, emitting less greenhouse gases than private vehicles and conserving energy.

We need to localize **agricultural production**. The majority of our current food systems are detrimental to the climate. Water is increasingly wasted, land and soil plots are eroded and degraded, deforestation contributes to increased carbon emissions. Additionally, carbon emissions are elevated during the production, packaging, and transportation of crops and crops. Local and federal governments must work towards implementing and supporting local food systems in the next ten years through developing a centralized state wholesale distribution system for locally grown produce and implementing an analytical model increasing efficiency

of allocating state resources to promote locally grown food. This will ensure equity of access to food for all communities and improve local economies. Many states across the U.S. have initiated and successfully supported their local agricultural systems.

In the same respect, the **climate justice issues** compounded by climate change must be tracked and addressed. All cities within the state need to measure the inclusion and equity impacts of programs aimed at tackling climate change (by 2030) to inform legislative decisions using data by neighborhood, income, gender, socioeconomic status, and other key indicators. The C40 Cities [indicator model](#) can guide this process and illustrates it in place within select cities internationally.

Beyond collecting data, **procedural justice** must be guaranteed and room must be made at the decision-making table for those most impacted by climate change - low-income and high-lying communities. This includes empowering these residents with knowledge through the implementation of national Interdisciplinary Climate Educational Standards, with depth and breadth that may be adapted regionally.

At the end of the day, this is a call for help; a genuine offer to work together in hopes for a better future. As our leaders, protecting us is something that should be natural and of utmost priority, but these days it seems like the people are last on the list.

The clock is ticking. Simply meeting every year, without action, to discuss solutions that are ready to be adopted and have been for years is ridiculous, given that people's homes, lives, and futures are at stake.

Enough is enough; the youth are sounding the alarm.