

# GRASSROOTS RISING

Volume 3: March 1, 2025

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"The founding fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors."

Supreme Court Justice Hugo L. Black's opinion June 31, 1971 on publication of the Pentagon Report.

## Republic of Congo: Indigenous Baka Women Meet for First Time to Strengthen Their Leadership and Self Esteem



Women from the host village were keen to take those from other communities into their forest so they could harvest wild yam together.

Photo: K. Holberton

Forest Peoples Programme (FPP):  
February 3, 2025

For French, go to <https://www.for-estpeoples.org> and click on this link:  
*Français: Espace d'échange pour les femmes Baka.*

The exchange organized for women from 16 villages in the Messok Dja forest in the Sangha department is the first time Baka women have had the

opportunity to gather and discuss matters important to them.

Earlier this year I had the good fortune to travel to Bala Ngomane, the indigenous district of Souanke in northern Republic of Congo, to take part in a cross-community gathering – the first of its kind in this area – of Baka women.

Under the shade of a palaver tree,

Baka women from 16 communities in the Messok Dja forest block came together for a three-day program of workshops and cultural exchange to discuss female leadership in Baka society, build their self-esteem, and share ideas for how to overcome damaging negative stereotypes about the Baka.

The event was organized by *L'Association pour la Promotion des Ecosystèmes Tropicaux et le Développement de la Sangha* (APETDS), a Congolese civil society based in Ouessou, in collaboration with FPP.

FPP and APETDS have been working closely with communities in the Messok Dja area for more than four years. Women in these communities have often shared with us their belief that they don't feel they are adequately represented or consulted in community decisions (particularly those concerning projects proposed by external actors that encroach on their lands), and that they would like to play a more active role in decision-making concerning their lands.

Indigenous people in the Republic of Congo already experience serious systemic discrimination, and the situation is yet more pronounced for Baka women, who suffer a double discrimination due to both their indigeneity and their gender.

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The objective of this event was to bring together women from communities across the forest block, to create a safe space for sharing their challenges and ideas.

Women of all ages were invited, with provisions made for mothers with babies and toddlers to bring their children. Very few had met each other before, and for many it was their first time away from their husbands and children. On arrival in Souanke, many of the women seemed nervous, but the novelty of the situation also lent a sense of excitement to the air.

Members of so many different Baka villages rarely – if ever – have the opportunity to gather together, which made the event particularly significant. Travel in this part of Congo is prohibitively expensive and, in the rainy season, especially challenging for communities between Sembe and Ng-bala, where the road is not paved. As one of the first such multi-day events organized in the region, the gathering was groundbreaking.

The first day opened with a ceremony attended by the mayor and other local dignitaries. When I first saw the grand set-up for the mayor, I worried

that it would seem invasive to the Baka women and undermine the “safe space” we hoped to create. However, it also became evident that the presence of the local “VIPs” served to highlight the importance of the event and give status to proceedings – not insignificant when a key objective was to be esteem-building. I think it would have been even more impactful if this part had happened at the end, when women had gained more confidence – a lesson for next time.

Journalists from *Télévision Congolaise* and Radio Congo recorded speeches given by the mayor and Erick Nkodia, the president of APETDS, as well as a short interview with one of the Baka participants. Unfortunately, her words weren’t featured in the item broadcast on the news later that day – which was rather ironic for a piece about raising the voices of Baka women, and starkly underlined the huge challenges faced.

Over the following days, the women – guided by a (female) external facilitator – discussed a wide range of topics in Baka and Lingala languages. Discussions centered on the role of women in Baka society, touching on different elements including education,

management of resources, decision-making, and women’s leadership.

Indigenous woman highlighted the collaborative nature of practices as they have traditionally been carried out – sustainably with the involvement of men and women, young and old.

Laurette YAYE explained: “*When we went into the forest with our grandparents, the women built the mongoulou [traditional dwelling made from leaves and branches] then they went fishing at the dam and the men went looking for honey. Once we arrived at the camp, the women prepared the fish caught during fishing so that the whole family can eat them in the evening. If a child is not feeling well, [the women] go and get the wood bark to prepare in order to give it to them.*”

From my perspective as an external observer, it seemed women were noticeably more animated when discussing the forest. They gave many examples of how women’s activities safeguard the environment. For example, GNITE from Bethel village explained how, just as the men avoid exhausting the supply of honey in order for the bees to recolonize their

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## How to Subscribe

Dear Friends,

If you’d like to receive future issues of my newspaper, please email me at [grassroots-coalition@pa.net](mailto:grassroots-coalition@pa.net). Also, email me if you have stories and photos you’d like me to consider publishing in future issues. I publish a Messages page similar to Letters to the Editor, so if you want to share your thoughts, please do so.

I’d like this to be a team effort as it has been in

the past, but we need time to develop this project and figure out ways to work together.

This is a labor of love but I always appreciate donations, which you can send to: Iona Conner, 157 Chambersbridge Road 4A, Brick, NJ 08723. If you use Zelle or PayPal, money goes directly to my bank account via [dosomething@pa.net](mailto:dosomething@pa.net). Cash is OK, too. Thank you!

For the Earth,

*Iona*



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(1) Purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes. . . .



*Baka women harvest wild yam in such a way that the plant can regenerate, making it a sustainable practice.*  
 Photo: K. Holberton

nest, “When women gather yams, we don’t leave the new shoots to die on the ground, we put the head of it back in the ground, so it produces again in future.”

Perhaps inevitably, given the pressures that the Baka and their forest are under, the discussion drifted to the manifold ways in which outsiders do not respect Baka taboos around land management and are harming the health of people and the environment. Women cited the over-fishing of their rivers, the poisoning of watercourses, unsustainable logging by outsiders, and over-hunting by non-Baka.

Participants also had a lot to say about women’s leadership. They recognized that women have not always

been traditionally designated as official leaders in Baka communities (for example, the status of chief has often been assumed by men). However, they pointed towards their own models of governance and organization, such as women’s groups set up to carry out fishing activities or gather non-timber forest products. The conversation moved to how women could better influence decisions in the community and take a leading role in the protection of their resources.


KPAPOSSO Esther, from Moutomayeck, shared her ideas about how to stop outsiders using poison to catch fish: “We should organize ourselves within the village and be brave enough to de-

nounce this practice to the village chief. And if it continues after having informed him, we can go to the Sous-préfet to ensure he knows about the situation.”

On our final evening together, two Ejengi forest spirits came out of the forest for the Ejengi dance ceremony, lit by the full moon – a rare occurrence. It felt like a blessing for the event and a moment of hope.

The exchange was an incredibly special thing to be a part of, and the community went to great efforts to make us feel welcome. I hope this will be the first of many events in the future.

**Source:** <https://www.forestpeoples.org/en/article/2025/ROC/indigenous-baka-women-exchange>






**SHUTDOWN**  
3.15  
MOVEMENT

**UNITED IN RESISTANCE**  
JOIN THE SHUTDOWN315 MOVEMENT  
GENERAL STRIKE/GENERAL BOYCOTT  
MARCH 15TH, 2025-TBD  
TOGETHER, WE WILL WIN.

WE HAVE PARTNERED WITH  
GENERAL STRIKEUS!  
SIGN OUR STRIKE CARD

FOLLOW US ON  
SUBSTACK

JOIN US ON TELEGRAM


**We Can Do It!**

It is Time to **FIGHT**  
for what is **RIGHT!**

Join the Movement




**SHUTDOWN**  
3.15  
MOVEMENT

UNITED IN RESISTANCE

Join the Movement



## The Shutdown315 Movement And What You Can Do To Help!

The Shutdown315 Movement via Matt Orsach's "Degrowth is the Answer" Substack page, with this headline: Will the Wealthy Consumer Less? And his introduction: *The Shutdown 315 movement aims to make a dent in the U.S. economy by convincing people to spend less in order to draw attention to real problems in America that need urgent attention, such as healthcare, democracy, climate change, and other issues.*

*The movement calls on citizens to lower their consumption and participation in the economy to the minimum level necessary in order to take away the wealth and power of the oligarch class currently ruling America.*

*But do they have enough firepower to make a dent?*

**Note from Iona:** About 25 years ago, I imagined being part of huge

boycotts of destructive multinational corporations so successful that those companies would go out of business and the world of small, local businesses would flourish. Shutdown315 is my dream in action, started by a small group of ordinary people.

*Shutdown 315 Report*  
February 16, 2025

WOW..... We are beyond speechless for the outpouring of support and success we have seen here on Substack. Our movement has gained so much traction over the past two weeks alone, thanks to all of you.

**This movement relies on you.** You are us, and we are you. You have so much power in your voice. Every little bit you do to support this movement brings us closer to our collective goal: taking down the oligarchy and remov-

ing the fascist regime taking over our beloved country.

**Every small action builds up.**

Every share, every comment, every like, every subscription, every mention of us. Our online connections and IRL interactions have brought us to today – and will continue carrying us forward.

*Kchi wliwni* ('BIG THANK YOU' in the western Abenaki language.)

To welcome our newcomers, here's an FAQ-style breakdown of the #SHUTDOWN315 movement.

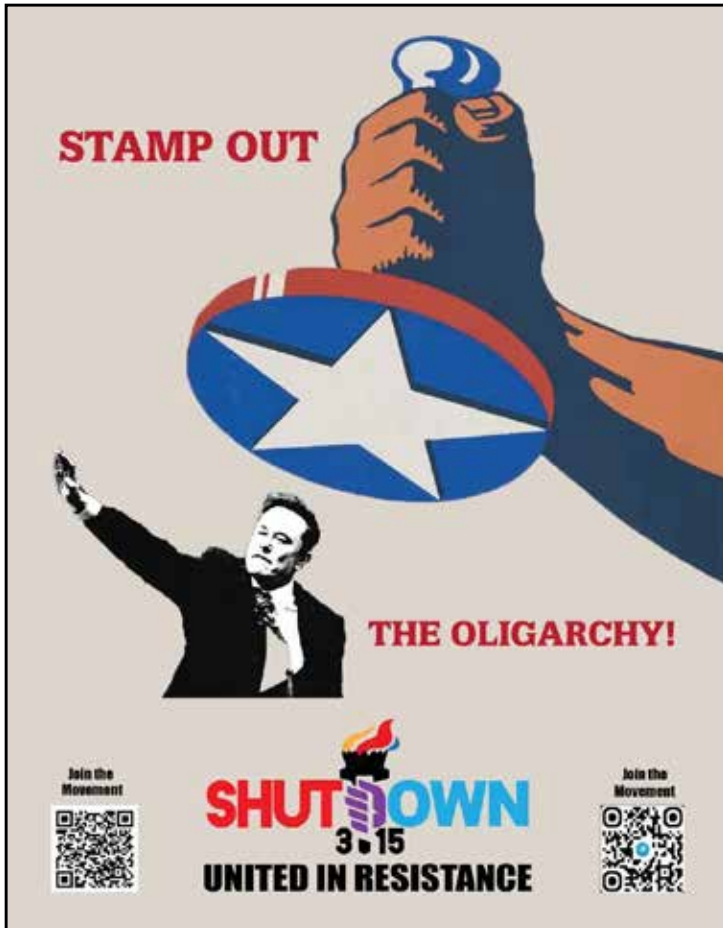
**What is #SHUTDOWN315?**

#Shutdown315 is a critical-mass movement of coordinated economic protests. In specific terms, it is economic disengagement by mass boycott and a general strike.

**When is this happening?** We begin our strike and boycott on March 15th,

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2025. Some of us have already begun.

**Why are you doing this?** We are doing this to stop the rise of fascism and to release our nation from the control of oligarchs. We are being destroyed from the inside out by a corrupt and greedy ruling class that has pitted us against each other – while they actively ‘re-appropriate’ (steal) billions of our taxpayer dollars.

By collective refusal to contribute our labor and dollars, we are demonstrating our greater power and willingness to harness that power.

**How does this work?** The oligarchy cannot function without our labor. Fascism cannot continue to gain power with a non-compliant population. The longer we wait to take action, the harder it will be to stop these forces.

**Who are we?** We are everyday people from a wide swath of cultural, political, and occupational backgrounds. We share the common goal

of mobilizing our collective economic power to starve the oligarchy of our labor + resources.

### Where Are We Today?

On Thursday, February 13th, *Newsweek* ran a feature on the Shutdown315 Movement. We are gaining enough traction to be noticed by mainstream media, which is HUGE. Please note that there are a few incorrect details in the article. The main correction is the following:

\* **We are not a 1-day strike.**

\* **We start our strike on 3/15.**

We don’t stop until the ruling class begins to address the demands of the working class.

We have partnered with **General-strikeUS** and will use our movement to build serious momentum into theirs. Shutdown315 has a unique strike card. When you sign our strike card, it contributes to their participant total \*and\* tallies how many people have joined

our movement. If you already signed their strike card, you can still sign ours. It will delete the old duplicate. You can find our link here: [Tinyurl.com/shutdown315](https://tinyurl.com/shutdown315)

We are now less than one month from March 15th as of this writing. We have received many concerns that our movement is waiting too long to start; however, a successful general strike takes years to organize. This historical reality is why we’re now partnered with GeneralStrikeUS.

A results-producing general strike also relies heavily on direct action and ample participation in spreading the word. We recognize that the U.S. is in a crisis **right now**. We need to prepare and organize ourselves sufficiently to 1) maintain our shutdown once it begins, and 2) allow a greater number of people, including those with dependents, to participate.

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*Photo: Andrew Winkler on Unsplash*

To those feeling the utmost urgency, we implore you to help spread the word as widely as possible! Movements such as **50501** are rapidly coordinating immediate actions. And, recognize time and energy needs channeling into action and support. Constructive critique comes with initiative – critique alone, without action, is counterproductive.

This is a multi-faceted fight, and we will not succeed without direct action. We are looking for ways to reach people who are on the fence about the state of our nation, and people who are regretful of supporting trump. We are also in need of ambitious individuals who are ready to help us spread the word far and wide. If you have large social media platforms, are involved in other activist and political movements/groups, or have experience organizing on a community level, please join us on our chat channels.

Thanks for reading! This post is public so feel free to share it at

<https://open.substack.com/pub/nolkaphanem/p/updates-for-the-shutdown315-movement>

**Please also remember to restack this post and share where you can.**

Below is a link to our Waiting Room on Telegram where admins send each new member the group rules and some questions. Once approved, we will send you the links to our Telegram and Signal chats.

<https://t.me/+YB2N9bFvCG84Zjdh>

Handing out information to people IRL is extremely effective (think community boards, coffee shops, protests, etc.), so please do this as well.

We have a small team of graphic designers who have been working very hard at creating fliers and graphics to distribute. So far, we have the ones pictured here plus a few others.

I also manufacture stickers with my personal printing equipment. These are available on my Etsy. As of this writing, I am in the middle of a re-stock; I will post the link once that is complete.

Due to the overwhelming amount of comments, we are unable to answer them all; our apologies. We see you and thank you all for the support.

We have opened paid ‘subscriptions’ on Substack. There is no pay-wall – these subscriptions function as donations. Paid and unpaid subscribers receive the same experience. Feel free to donate to us but know that it is not necessary. This movement is for everyone. Donations will be used to fund organizational efforts like printing, website usage, or other expenses relating to the movement.

Thank you very much for any support you can give. Free or paid; it is all important.

**Together, we will win!**

For more information, check out our other Substack posts. Subscribe to us and stay updated!

**Source:** <https://substack.com/home/post/p-157290075>



A Greenpeace USA projection on a building in Washington, D.C. on February 14, 2025. Photo: Tim Aubry/Greenpeace)

## The Case That Could Inflict ‘Financial Ruin’ on Greenpeace Heads to Trial

“This fight is bigger than Greenpeace. This lawsuit is a blatant attempt to silence critics and hide destructive practices,” said the campaign director of Greenpeace USA.

By Eloise Goldsmith  
*Common Dreams: February 20, 2025*

With a high-stakes court trial between the environmental organization Greenpeace and the developer of the Dakota Access Pipeline, Energy Transfer, set to begin Monday, the green group earlier this month lit up multiple locations in both Dallas and Washington, D.C. with giant projections that displayed messages such as, “You Can’t Put a Movement on Trial” and “Big Oil Is Suing Greenpeace.”

The Dallas-based oil and gas company Energy Transfer – whose executive chairman Warren Kelcy is a donor to U.S. President Donald Trump, according to *The Guardian* – has accused Greenpeace and other activists of inciting protests that took place against the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016 and 2017, as well as spreading misinformation about and vandalizing the project.

The lawsuit names Greenpeace International and two U.S. Greenpeace entities. Greenpeace maintains that the protests were directed by Indigenous leaders, not Greenpeace.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and its allies said the pipeline, which has been in operation since 2017 and carries crude oil from the Brakken oil fields in North Dakota to Illinois, would endanger the water supply for the reservation and violate the tribe’s right to its land.

If successful, the \$300 million lawsuit could inflict “financial ruin” on the group, according to Greenpeace. This would have a chilling effect on the organization’s work, but leaders within the group have also cast it as an attack on the environmental movement and free speech more broadly.

“This fight is bigger than Greenpeace. This lawsuit is a blatant attempt to silence critics and hide destructive practices,” said Rolf Skar, the campaign director of Greenpeace USA, in a Tuesday statement.

Of the projections in D.C. and Dallas, Skar said they “are a testament to that resilience, shining a light on the truth and reminding everyone fighting for a just and livable future that we will not back down.”

In a similar vein, Deepa Padmanabha, Greenpeace’s deputy general counsel, told *The Guardian* that, “Energy Transfer and the fossil fuel industry do not understand the difference between entities and movements. You can’t bankrupt the movement. You can’t silence the movement. There will be a backlash and a price to pay when you pursue these kinds of tactics.”

“People power is more powerful,” she added.

The case has also been decried as an example of what are known as “Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation” – or “SLAPP” lawsuits, meritless cases whose goal is to bankrupt civil society groups and nonprofits with years of litigation and legal fees.

Greenpeace International, which is based in Amsterdam, has been the first group to initiate a lawsuit under the European Union’s new anti-SLAPP directive. The group has sued in a Dutch court to recoup losses it has incurred as a result of its legal fight with Energy Transfer.

Of its bid under the anti-SLAPP directive, Daniel Simons, senior legal counsel at Greenpeace International, said in early February that, “If we prevail, it will send a message to cor-

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# Life in Activism: Staying Hopeful is a Choice

## And it is up to you to make the right choice.

By Chris Bowers  
*Wolves and Sheep Substack*  
 February 25, 2025

Shortly after the election, I published an article titled, “It’s Time To Focus on What You Can Do, Not What Democrats Should Do.” This is perhaps my most popular article of all time here at Wolves and Sheep, and I still very much believe in the sentiment behind the piece. After all, I don’t control the behavior of “the Democrats” – whoever is actually meant by that vague term – but I can control what I do.

That said, upon reviewing the article three months later, I think that it needs some more flesh on its bones. What, exactly, can individual people do to resist Trump on their own, instead of becoming too focused on what people who they can’t control, such as Democratic leaders in Congress, are doing?

Over the next few weeks here in my Life in Activism column, I am going to provide far more detailed answers to that question. The answer, in short, is that you can control your attitude, your judgements, your interactions with others, how you spend your time, and your resources.

Today, I am going to focus on the first of those five: your attitude. Specifically, it is up to you, not to any leading politicians or influential commentators, as to whether or not you



*This sheep was part of a roaming herd Matt Kerbel encountered on a hike near Zermatt, Switzerland last summer. Photo: Matt Kerbel/Wolves and Sheep*

stay hopeful in this difficult moment. Being hopeful is a choice – a choice you need to make, and not one anyone can make for you.

I am writing to you today to ask you to become a paid subscriber to Bowers News Media and Wolves and Sheep. Becoming a paid subscriber of one gives you the benefits of subscrib-

ing to both. You can become a paid subscriber at <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/bnmpac2> or through the Wolves and Sheep Substack, if you prefer.

**Source:** <https://open.substack.com/pub/wolvesandsheep/p/life-in-activism-staying-hopeful>

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porate bullies that the age of impunity is ending. That would be a boost for civil society in the E.U. and point to solutions for those battling the SLAPP phenomenon elsewhere.”

There is no federal anti-SLAPP law on the books in the United States.

There has also been intrigue sur-

rounding the circumstances of the upcoming trial in North Dakota. Greenpeace unsuccessfully sought to have the case moved to a different court over concerns of potential jury bias. *The Guardian* and the local outlet the *North Dakota Monitor* have reported on mysterious mailers that were sent

to local residents that contain written material slanted against Dakota Access Pipeline protestors and in favor of Energy Transfer.

**Source:** <https://www.commondreams.org/news/greenpeace-trial-energy-transfer>



# System Economics: Searching for tipping points...and that is what we did.

By Hans Stegeman, excerpt

January 12, 2025

Graphic on next page: Triodos Bank

We live in brutal times. Times where we have reached (already!) 1.5 degrees of global warming last year. Times where the wealthiest 1% on Earth have already used up the carbon budget for this year.

Also, a time when it is so easy to be pessimistic about almost anything if you are looking for positive change.

But this is luckily not the whole story. Even not when we see populist votes winning, Trump inaugurated next week, and plutocrats like Elon Musk radicalizing, even not when big tech (Zuck goes full Musk) aligns with the new Trump reality. And also not when U.S. finance leaves the biggest climate finance alliance (GFANZ).

No. Although it seems all negative, many people – less outspoken, noisy, and influential – want the world to become a better place. They want an energy transition. They believe we could or should buy less, eat more healthily, and care more about each other. You could call it the undercurrent; you could also call it a silent majority.

We discovered this hopeful message when we published our ‘different-style’ economic outlook for the Netherlands over a week ago.

We (my colleague Ernst Hobma and I) started by assessing the main bottlenecks in the Dutch economy and translating them into ‘transition language.’

What are the five most significant changes that need to happen to make the Dutch economy future-proof? Of course, these transitions are not unique to the Dutch economy; they can easily be applied to any economy.

Based on that assessment, we constructed a survey and hired an agency



(Motivaction) to optimize it. We also held the study under a representative Dutch panel.

## The main conclusions:

### 1. Support for Change vs. Resistance

In every transition, a significantly larger group of Dutch citizens favored change than those opposed it. On average, 50% support change, while only 15% oppose it.

### 2. Behavioral Adoption and Transition Readiness

- The largest group already adopting expected behaviors – or planning to do so – is seen in the energy transition (e.g., reducing air travel) and the social transition (e.g., engaging in volunteer work), with 22% of people in each case.

- The well-being transition and food transition lag behind, with adoption rates below 15%, far from the 25% tipping point where systemic change accelerates. However, including those who social norms or price incentives might influence could help bring these transitions closer to the tipping point.

- The resource transition (e.g., reducing raw material use) remains the

furthest from a tipping point, with only pioneers taking action. Few people plan to join, and price mechanisms have minimal impact.

### 3. Demographic Variations

- Resistance to change is lowest among seniors (65+) and young people (under 25).

- Older adults (55+) tend to take more action themselves, while younger people are slightly less likely – or less able – to act.

- Higher-educated individuals are more open to transitions than those with lower education levels.

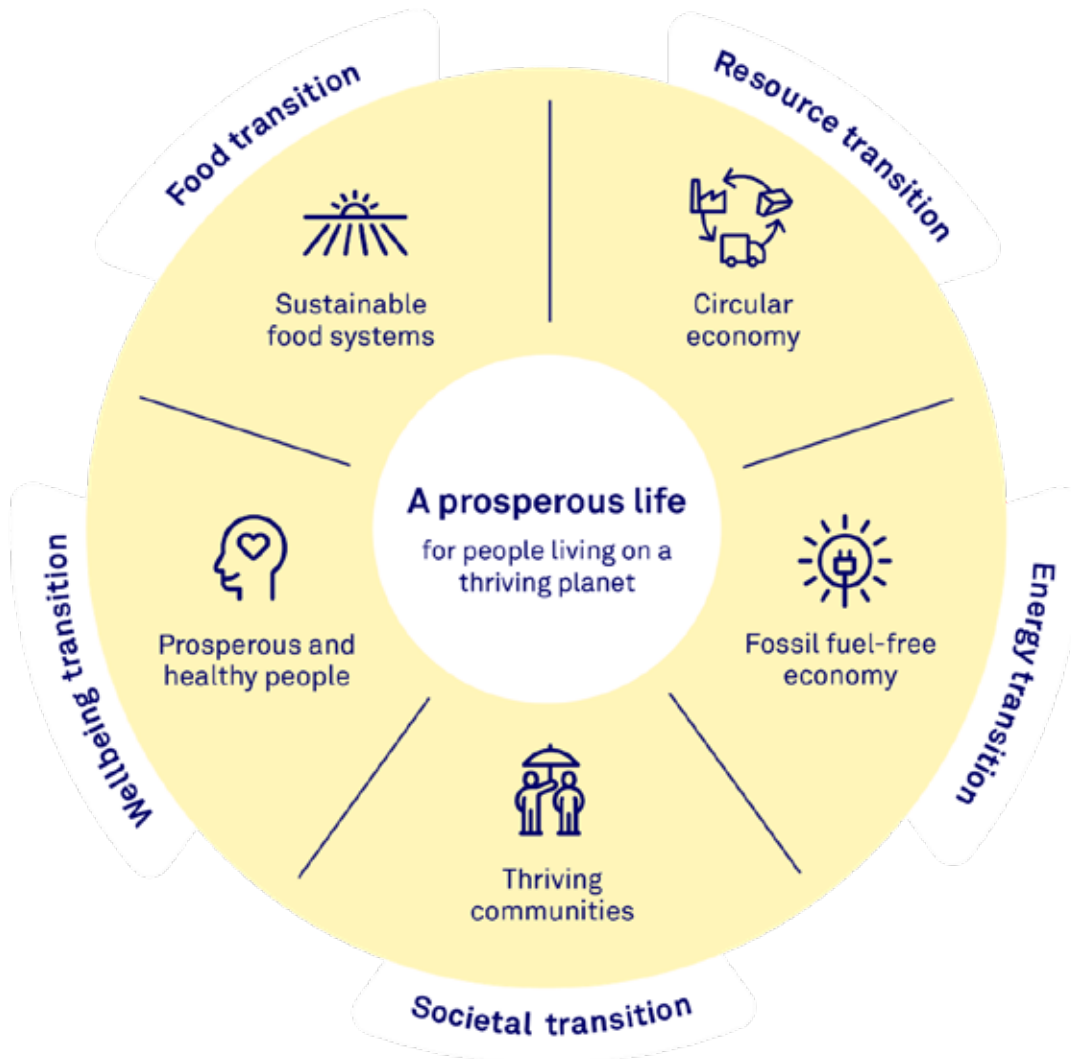
### 4. Expectations for Action

- Over 70% of Dutch citizens expect businesses to act more quickly to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and resource consumption in energy, food, and resources.

- Most expect the government to improve social cohesion by keeping community centers and sports facilities open and subsidizing initiatives that strengthen local communities.

- However, people also think that they are responsible for getting change. We don't have to wait for

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politicians.

**5. Meat Consumption Policies**

Government policies to discourage meat consumption have little support. Most non-vegetarians (68%) express no interest in reducing meat consumption.

We conclude that people are not stupid. They understand that we need more radical action, but most don't know how and fear that change will worsen them.

Our call to action is simple for all Dutch citizens who consider sustainability transitions necessary: share this message with others. Please share it with your friends, neighbors, local government, sports club, bank, pet, the companies you buy from, and even strangers on the street. This is how social norms shift, bringing the tipping point ever closer.

It might not surprise me if similar re-

search in other countries yields the same results: People are willing – at least a significant, silent majority are. Question number one is how to mobilize them.

And remember: don't let yourself be overwhelmed by all the negative news. There is always a spark of hope – friends, like-minded individuals, neighbors, and family striving to improve the world for themselves and future generations and others around the globe. Courageous people who take action, try new things and create change – not just by writing and analyzing, as I often do, but by rolling up their sleeves and making it happen.

The whole report can be found at [de-nederlandse-economie-in-2025---grootscheepse-verbouwing-kan-beginnen.pdf](https://de-nederlandse-economie-in-2025---grootscheepse-verbouwing-kan-beginnen.pdf) (unfortunately, in Dutch). Below is a slightly shortened

and slightly adapted translated version.

**The Dutch Economy in 2025  
A Major Overhaul Can Begin  
The Dutch Economy:  
A Balancing Act**

At first glance, the Dutch economy seems to be doing quite well. Unemployment is low, government debt is under control, and while inflation remains high, it is on a downward trend. The Netherlands continues to earn more from international trade than it spends abroad. Pension funds are well-funded; on average, Dutch citizens are happier and wealthier than residents of many other countries. . . .

**The Five Major Transitions**

For years, numerous reports have emphasized the necessity of structural changes to the Dutch economy.

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In some areas, the Netherlands has already formulated objectives for these transitions.

**1. Energy Transition**

The energy transition target is clear: a 55% reduction in emissions by 2030. This goal is legally binding, yet the Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) warns that current policies are insufficient to meet it. Achieving this target requires extraordinary efforts from the government, central greenhouse gas-emitting companies, and households.

**2. Resource Use**

The national goal for resource use is equally ambitious: by 2050, the Netherlands aims to be fully circular. Achieving this transformation involves significant work. The PBL suggests every possible strategy to reduce resource consumption: producing products more sustainably, ensuring longer lifespans, making them repairable and dismantlable, and shifting from ownership to sharing models. Moreover, individuals will need to adopt more sustainable consumption habits.

**3. Agriculture and Food Systems**

The agricultural sector faces well-documented challenges. Nitrogen emissions are too high, and manure issues continue to accumulate. These issues demand bold policy choices, including reducing intensive livestock farming and transitioning to plant-based and organic diets. However, this shift toward a sustainable agricultural and food system is progressing too slowly.

These three transitions primarily concern the future – what sustainability experts call “well-being later.” The Netherlands is not performing well on this front. However, challenges also remain in the present.

**4. Health and Well-being**

The Dutch population doesn't always eat or live healthily. Without policy changes, obesity, driven by unhealthy lifestyles and dietary habits, is expected to increase further in the coming years. While many Dutch citizens report being generally satis-

fied, stress among young people is a growing concern. Well-being also encompasses financial security and affordable housing. Despite low unemployment rates, people worry about their incomes and housing availability.

**5. Social Cohesion and Politics**

Concerns about how society interacts and The Hague's political climate are mounting. Different groups within society are increasingly disconnected, threatening social cohesion: when people don't know each other, they can't understand one another's expectations or work together to solve problems.

These transitions are essential, but they raise critical questions. Do we, as Dutch citizens, want them? Where do they currently stand? Are some more advanced than others? How can they be accelerated?

A conventional economic outlook does not offer answers to these questions. Such analyses typically focus on a stagnating economy, a tight labor market, and strategies to boost economic growth slightly. Structural changes are often absent from forecasts, which tend to prioritize short-term economic cycles.

But given the urgent challenges facing the Netherlands – and the world – a standard outlook is no longer sufficient. Further growth of the current unsustainable economic system, rooted in economic growth and profit maximization regardless of societal or environmental costs, is untenable and economically unwise.

So, we have been looking for social tipping points (see also my previous substack on tipping point investing) at <https://hansstegeman.substack.com/p/31-tipping-points-investing>.

Tipping points are moments when relatively small changes lead to a significant shift in the system. Social tipping points occur, for example, when the behavioral change of a small group leads to a shift in societal norms, causing many more people to change their behavior in a relatively short time.

Social tipping points are not a new phenomenon. The saying “Once one sheep crosses the bridge, the rest will follow” refers to social tipping points. Reaching social tipping points around sustainable behavior could significantly contribute to advancing sustainability.

To ensure long-term well-being, we must embrace transitions – significant societal changes driven by technological or social developments. Transitions are rarely straightforward. Established interests – such as companies profiting from the current system – often resist change. Likewise, individuals who feel uncertain about altering or failing to see its necessity may fear things will worsen. Resistance tends to intensify as a tipping point approaches.

However, many people are already working toward these necessary transitions. Change is underway from neighborhood initiatives to energy cooperatives, from sustainable farming collectives to repair cafés. Not everyone needs to be a frontrunner: research suggests that engaging 25% of the population is enough to establish a new normal and push society past a tipping point. . . .

**The Five-Transitions Survey**

We conducted a representative survey of 1,048 Dutch citizens in collaboration with the research agency Motivaction. This survey asked respondents about their views on five transitions essential for creating a sustainable, well-being-focused society. These questions aimed to identify social tipping points – moments when a transition becomes irreversibly accelerated and leads to a new societal norm.

In the survey, participants were asked whether they believe a (faster) transition is necessary in each of the five areas. They were also asked who drives such transitions: citizens, businesses, or the government. Additionally, respondents shared specific actions they are already taking in these

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transitions and the factors that might motivate them to change their behavior. For instance:

We also included questions about the extent to which people believe their behavior influences the behavior of others and vice versa.

### **A Significant Gap Between Thinking and Doing**

While respondents generally consider ecological transitions necessary, only a tiny group has fully adjusted their behavior. For both the energy transition and resource use, many respondents indicate that they will only change their behavior when the less ecologically harmful option becomes the cheapest, when they are forced to do so, or when no other alternatives remain. For instance, people are willing to buy locally or switch to green energy, but only if it becomes the most affordable option.

However, a notable minority (10–20%) plans to take action in the future for most behaviors – except giving up meat and dairy or relinquishing car ownership.

Well-being and social transitions present a more nuanced picture. Many people are already taking action, and a significant group intends to become more active. Additionally, many would adjust their behavior if the government took more decisive steps to encourage the desired actions.

### **Citizens Alone Cannot Drive Transitions**

While many people are already taking action across various transitions, the results show that even those who consider a transition necessary and see a role for consumers struggle to change their behavior radically.

For example, among respondents who view 4 or 5 transitions as necessary – highly change-oriented individuals – 90% believe that citizens should strive to reduce resource consumption. Sharing or renting a car is one way to

achieve this. However, 30% of this group indicated they were unwilling to share a car, and another 20% said they would only do so if there were no other options. This demonstrates that even for those who acknowledge the necessity of transitions and expect action from citizens, specific changes in their own lives are far from automatic.

This highlights that individual consumer choices cannot fully account for successful transitions. Collaboration between the government, businesses, and the social environment is essential to achieve the necessary changes. To promote change effectively, government and corporate measures should be evaluated not only for their efficiency but also for their social acceptability.

### **Companies Alone Cannot Drive Transitions; Incentives (Including Pricing) Are Essential**

Respondents expect companies to lead in reducing resource use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. There is less support for strong, directive government policies, and people often state that they will opt for the cheapest option regarding personal behavior.

While companies have a critical role in reducing their resource consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> footprint, relying solely on businesses to act is unrealistic if consumers continue to prioritize the cheapest option and the government sticks to current policies. Many sustainable practices – such as designing longer-lasting products, ensuring reparability, or reducing emissions – are often not the most cost-effective options in the short term.

Just as it is unreasonable to place full responsibility for transitions on the individual choices of citizens, it is equally unrealistic to expect companies to solve these issues entirely on their own. However, as seen during the energy crisis, transitions can accelerate dramatically when sustainability becomes the cheapest option. To make the most sustainable choices, both af-

fordable and unavoidable, normative policies or pricing mechanisms from the government are often necessary.

### **Tipping Points for Energy and Social Transitions Are Within Reach**

The success of any transition depends on multiple parties and developments. For each transition, a significantly larger group of Dutch citizens favored change than opposed it. . . .

For every transition, a segment of the population is already taking significant steps to contribute to change. The largest group actively engaged is in the CO<sub>2</sub> reduction transition, with 11% already taking action. The social transition follows closely, with 9% of the population actively participating.

For both transitions, the critical mass of 25% needed to reach a tipping point is getting closer. This includes those planning to become more active. . . .

When combining those already taking action with those planning to act, 22% of respondents are involved in the energy and social transitions.

Including people who would adjust their behavior if it became advantageous or if many others in their social environment were to do so – those who are motivated by external factors – a substantial minority of over 25% of Dutch citizens are ready to take action. This means that tipping points for both the energy and social transitions are within reach.

The well-being and food transitions, however, are more complex. While the well-being transition enjoys considerable support, very few people are already taking significant action, and only a tiny group intends to do so. Together, these groups currently represent less than 15%, far below the critical mass of 25%. However, if we include respondents motivated by their surroundings or favorable prices, the 25% tipping point could still come into view relatively quickly. Achieving

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this, however, will require action from all stakeholders.

A tipping point in the resource transition is not yet within reach. Only pioneers are taking action, and only a tiny group intends to follow their lead. Even with pricing mechanisms, less than 25% of respondents indicated they would change their behavior. This suggests that significant progress in the resource transition remains a challenge.

### **Resistance is Highest Among Middle-Aged People and Those with Lower Education Levels**

Transition resistance is generally lowest among older adults over 65 and young people under 25. Resistance is more commonly found among middle-aged individuals. However, people over 55 are relatively active in taking steps themselves. Young people under 25 are less willing to take action than middle-aged individuals, likely because some actions are less accessible to them – for example, generating sustainable energy is only feasible for those who own a home.

There is also a clear difference in

attitudes based on education level. Half of highly educated individuals support four or five transitions, compared to only a quarter of those with lower education levels. Highly educated individuals also take more action than those with lower education levels. Additionally, women are slightly more active than men in taking individual action...

### **The Role of Citizens**

For citizens contemplating change, the most significant potential lies in activating their networks. Both norm-setting and behavioral shifts are primarily social processes.

Smoking in the Netherlands offers a good example: in the 1980s, most people considered it completely normal to smoke in public spaces. Today, even smokers often view it as a bad habit. As a result, the number of smokers has significantly decreased.

While people may not see their social circles as decisive in shaping their behavior, research suggests that social norms play a crucial role. The survey results support this: respondents were grouped by “mentalities” – clusters

based on shared worldviews. These mentalities often correlate with social networks, and respondents within the same mentality group gave similar answers about norms and behaviors. This underscores the importance of social environments in shaping norms and behavior.

The call to action for all Dutch citizens who value sustainability transitions is clear: make your commitment known. Share your views with your friends, neighbors, local government, sports clubs, banks, the companies you buy from, and even strangers on the street. This is how social norms shift, and tipping points become closer.

If this momentum builds, 2025 could mark a significant step toward a sustainable Netherlands.

Hans's Substack is free today. But if you enjoyed this post, you can tell Hans's Substack that their writing is valuable by pledging a future subscription. You won't be charged unless they enable payments.

**Source:** <https://hansstegeman.substack.com>

**When we are engaged in acts of love, we humans are at our best and most resilient. The love in romance that makes us want to be better people, the love of children that makes us change our whole lives to meet their needs, the love of family that makes us drop everything to take care of them, the love of community that makes us work tirelessly with broken hearts.**

*~ adrienne maree brown ~*

# Are You a Consumer or a Person?

## You can't answer both. That's cheating.

By Matt Orsagh

*Degrowth is the Answer Substack*

February 10, 2025

Photo: Hana Oliver on Unsplash

Your government doesn't see you as a person to be served, they see you as a consumer to be prodded into consuming 2% more each year.

What if you didn't?

### **This isn't new.**

Although a lot was made of a recent *Wall Street Journal* report about "Buy Nothing," the Buy Nothing movement has been around formally for over a decade. Those who are pledging "No Buy 2025" may be disappointed to learn that they aren't the trend setters they thought they were. They are welcome all the same.

The BuyNothing Project is a Benefit Corporation, started by a few friends in Washington State in the U.S. in 2013.

BuyNothing has 7.5 million members worldwide, and 850 thousand people have downloaded the BuyNothing App to help people connect locally and build sharing communities all around the world.

If you are ever feeling down, go read the BuyNothing Principles at <https://buynothingproject.org/about>.

We don't use "by nothing" a lot, but we have used it plenty to share kids clothes, toys, and other items that we don't use anymore and don't need to go to the landfill. We have also picked up pieces of furniture, items our kids use. BuyNothing doesn't advertise, so they have grown through word of mouth over a decade to over 7.5 million users. With the recent publicity about BuyNothing pledges, I hope their influence grows. BuyNothing is



a great little tool that can help local communities help each other and connect with each other. It is also a great degrowth tool that has thus far pushed gently back against hyper consumerism and planned obsolescence.

So please, check out BuyNothing and sign up yourself and get those in your community to do so. I would imagine when BuyNothing reaches a couple 100 million users, national governments may have to try to shut it down. They can't have citizens of their countries treated like people before consumers, and people that help each other not be consumers. That would be terrible.

### **What if we did this on purpose, at a larger scale?**

The BuyNothing pledge got me thinking. What if citizens used the BuyNothing ethos to exercise their power.

Consumer consumption is the main driver of economic growth in most

economies around the world, and in aggregate global consumer spending drives about 60 percent of global GDP. That is a lot of power that consumers have.

Consumer attitudes and habits don't change overnight. We have been trained to be consumers first and citizens second. Remember, about 100 years ago in America executives realized that they had to train us to believe that our wants were our needs:

*"We must shift America from a needs to a desires culture. People must be trained to desire, to want new things even before the old had been consumed. We must shape a new mentality in America. Man's desires must overshadow his needs,"* said Paul Mazur, an executive at Lehman Brothers back in 1927 in an article from the *Harvard Business Review*.

Mr. Mazur is no longer with us, but he'd be pleased to know that he suc-

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ceeded. Just look at this next quote.

If we as consumers ... excuse me, citizens ... organized around withholding our consumption, well, the sky's the limit. We could tell our leaders "That's a nice economy you've got there. It'd be a shame if anything happened to it."

### **But wouldn't we just be hurting ourselves?**

If all consumers went on strike and stopped purchasing goods and services, the impact would be devastating for the economy, but for those consumers ... I mean, citizens as well. Here's what any good economist will tell you would happen.

**1. Economic Disruption:** Businesses across all sectors would face severe losses due to the sudden halt in revenue. Small businesses and industries reliant on daily consumer spending, like retail and hospitality, would be particularly hard-hit.

**2. Supply Chain Chaos:** With no demand, the production and distribution of goods would be disrupted. This could lead to overstocked warehouses, spoilage of perishable goods, and eventually, a slowdown or halt in manufacturing.

**3. Job Losses:** As businesses struggle to cope with the loss of income, layoffs and furloughs would become inevitable. Unemployment rates would skyrocket, further exacerbating the economic downturn.

**4. Government Intervention:** Governments might step in to stabilize the economy, potentially introducing measures like stimulus packages, subsidies for businesses, or temporary social safety nets for unemployed workers.

**5. Social Impact:** The strike could raise awareness about consumer power and potentially lead to lasting changes in consumer behavior, business practices, or even policy reforms. However, the immediate social impact would likely include increased stress and hardship for those directly affected

by the economic fallout.

**6. Potential for Innovation:** Some businesses might pivot to new models, such as offering essential services or finding ways to engage consumers without direct purchases. This could drive innovation and lead to the development of new industries.

In essence, a consumer strike would be a powerful demonstration of the interconnectedness of our economic system and the critical role that everyday consumers play in sustaining it. It would hurt the economy, but it would hurt the people too, as we are the economy.

I can see targeted buyers' strikes having a positive impact. If millions or tens of millions of people began to organize to not buy products or services from companies that threaten our future, I can see that moving the needle

For example, if people put together a list of the top 25 companies that are most responsible for the breaching of our planetary boundaries, and there was a serious and prolonged campaign to not invest in those companies, I can see those efforts making a dent in the bottom lines of those companies.

### **But what if you don't have a choice?**

In such a scenario, many of those companies would be oil and gas companies, and the way our lives are structured now, it would be hard for tens of millions of people to change the infrastructure that has most of us hooked on oil and gas, even if we don't want to be.

But you have to start somewhere. If something like what I described above exists, let me know. I didn't find it.

But we should start as individuals, gathering with other individuals to promote a type of BuyNothing ethic that builds community while building resilience. The more our lives can be structured around sharing communities, the less we will be at the whims of those

in power that only see us as consumers, and not as citizens, or even people.

### **So here's an idea.**

What if the population of a country, say America, dedicated to become independent in egg production. By independent, I mean most Americans wouldn't have to get eggs from the grocery store, but got them from local communities, either through a co-op or similar organization, or direct from local farmers or friends. That increase in supply from the people would ultimately lower prices for those who couldn't raise hens or weren't close to a place that did.

For American households to become independent in egg production, several factors would need to be considered:

**1. Space and Environment:** Each household would need enough space to house a small flock of laying hens. This includes a coop for shelter and a secure outdoor area for the hens to roam and forage.

**2. Number of Hens:** On average, each hen lays about 300 eggs per year. To meet the average annual consumption of eggs per person (around 287 eggs), a household would need about 1-2 hens per person.

**3. Nutrition and Health:** Hens require a balanced diet to produce eggs consistently. This includes grains, protein, and calcium.

**4. Time and Care:** Raising hens requires daily care, including feeding, cleaning, and collecting eggs. It's a commitment that requires time and effort.

**5. Local Regulations:** Some areas have regulations regarding backyard poultry, such as limits on the number of hens or requirements for coop construction. It's important to check local laws and ordinances.

**6. Economic Considerations:** While raising hens can reduce grocery costs, there are initial setup costs for the coop, feed, and other supplies. Over time, the savings on eggs can

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offset these costs.

Yeah, I cheated and got that list from an article on raising hens, but I knew most of that already.

My family has chickens, and for most of the year we don't need to buy eggs. I'm pretty sure what we spend on chicken food and chicken protection outweighs the "free" eggs we get, but chickens offer other services as well.

**Pest-control.** Chickens walk around the property eating bugs and grubs all day. The year before we got chickens, we had a huge Japanese Beetle infestation. Two years into our chicken ownership, and not Japanese Beetle grub has survived. We also have fewer ticks and other insect pests.

**Garbage disposal.** Chickens will eat merely any food scraps you don't. Don't give them anything rotten or poisonous, but we have likely saved thousands of pounds of food waste going into the landfill over the years due to our chickens.

**Eggs from your backyard taste better than store eggs.** The eggs we have are healthier and taste better. I'll eat store-bought eggs, but now I can

tell the difference. I guess I'm an egg snob.

You have to invest in feeding the chickens and protecting the chickens. The foxes, bears, racoons, and every other predator will win sometimes, but we have learned to protect our girls pretty well, and now most of our chickens die of old age, not predation.

If individual families don't have enough land for chickens, people can form co-ops to invest in chickens as a resource for the community. Yes, people will have to take care of the hens, and feed them and give them water, but chickens are pretty low maintenance. If you keep them safe, provide them with water and some food – half of which may be your food scraps, they should be fine.

If enough communities invested in chicken co-ops, or enough individuals invested in chickens, Americans wouldn't have "the price of eggs" as an election issue ever again. That "the price of eggs" was an election issue last year shows that we aren't resilient enough. A country as big and rich as America should be more fucking egg

resilient. This is embarrassing.

If we were more resilient on this one issue, we wouldn't see ourselves as just consumers, but as individuals in communities that take care of ourselves by coordinating on the things that we can control.

If American citizens wanted to, we could be self-sufficient in egg production. It would free us from just being seen as consumers, by ourselves and by the powerful. We call them the powerful because they have power over us.

What if we took that power away?

Eggs are just one of thousands of examples, where building community at the local level can take away the power of those who see us only as consumers.

So let me know if anyone is building an app to organize consumers. I'll be happy to share my chicken husbandry tips.

Rule # One: Don't get a rooster. Roosters are the worst.

**Source:** <https://degrowthisthe-answer.substack.com/>

**“The people [in Cameroon],” he said. “Even though it’s a poor country compared to the U.S. or Europe, there’s a lot of laughter there. People seem to have a knack for finding pleasure in everyday things, despite their hardships. The country has a refugee crisis because of the wars going on in neighboring countries, and there’s definitely poverty and suffering, but I was always amazed at how much more resilient, and even happy, most people seemed there compared to folks living in America.” Then he broke into a wide smile.**

**“Oh, and I remember playing soccer. I played a lot of soccer.”**

*~ Nicholas Sparks, Counting Miracles, page 83 ~*





An ad on a bus stop in London advertises Tesla vehicles as “swasticators” on February 26, 2025. Photo: @everyone-hateselon\_/Instagram

## In Viral Campaign, Anti-Musk UK Group Urges Public: ‘Don’t Buy a Swasticar’

The Tesla, promises an advertisement posted in London, “Goes from zero to 1939 in three seconds.”

By Julia Conley

*Common Dreams: February 27, 2025*

With the motto, “Pissing off Elon Musk, one small action at a time,” a U.K.-based campaign group unveiled an advertisement this week promoting what it called a “swasticar” – the Tesla vehicles sold by the billionaire mogul who has taken a front-and-center role in U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration.

The ad, which first appeared Monday, features an image of Musk standing in one of his cars while displaying a Nazi salute – as he appeared to do twice at an event for Trump shortly after the president’s inauguration last month.

The Tesla, the ad promises, “goes from zero to 1939 in three seconds.”

The image has been displayed on at least one bus stop in Bethnal Green,

London, by a group called Everyone Hates Elon.

Pictures of the ad have gone viral online, and the group called on supporters to help ensure its message spreads far and wide as Musk’s dismantling of U.S. government agencies and services, including its foreign aid agency, and his support for far-right political parties in Europe sparks outrage.

“Not happy with fueling the far-right in the USA, Elon Musk is now doing the same in Europe,” wrote organizers on a GoFundMe page, where they are attempting to raise £10,000 (\$12,632) to plaster its “swasticar” ad in more public places.

“We can’t let the richest man in the world poison our politics. While nurses use food banks, his wealth grew by \$200 billion last year,” wrote the group, referring to the U.K.’s cost-of-living crisis.

In the U.K., Musk has expressed support for the far-right, virulently anti-immigrant Reform Party and attacked officials from the Labour government, spreading what Prime

Minister Keir Starmer decried last month as “lies and misinformation” about crimes allegedly committed by immigrants.

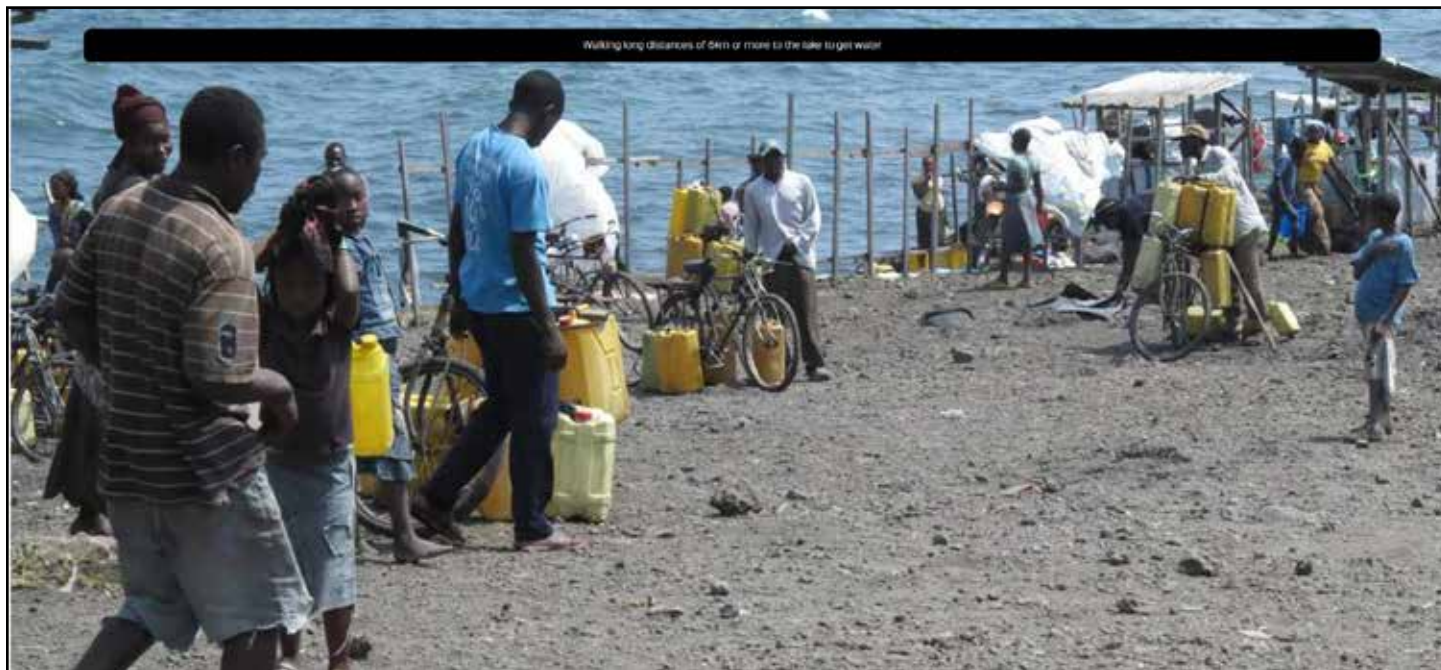
This week, Musk’s favored party in Germany, Alternative for Germany, lost the elections but caused international alarm as it doubled its vote share since the last nationwide vote. The party has platformed candidates who have used Nazi slogans and diminished the Holocaust and has been classified as a suspected extremist group by Germany’s intelligence service.

Musk’s encroachment in European politics has been met with contempt, with Tesla sales dropping by more than half in Germany last month.

Everyone Hates Elon wrote sardonically in an Instagram post that it would “be a shame if [the swasticar ads] popped up around the world.” Organizers have also plastered hundreds of Teslas in London with stickers telling passersby, “Don’t buy a swasticar.”

**Source:** <https://www.common-dreams.org/news/tesla-ad>

## OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION



Walking long distances to the lake to get water in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: [www.ajvdc.com](http://www.ajvdc.com)

# Special Report from Friend in DR Congo

### First email: February 17

I'm glorifying God to keep us alive up to now.

Here in Goma, DR Congo, we have lived a horrible battle between Rebels of M23 supported by Rwanda and Government army.

This fighting has lasted for 3 days and has caused more people to die, more than 3,000 have died. Rebels still control the city and continue to occupy other cities in all Eastern of Congo.

We are blocked in many activities, surviving activities are blocked. Humanitarian crises have increased, displaced people, children, and women are the most vulnerable.

I'm calling for all the groups to pray for us and send any support for emergency assistances.

As an ecologist, we are also thinking on how to repair the ecosystem that has been destroyed by displaced people and humanitarian interventions in the place where they were camping.

They have cut all the trees to build

their huts and cooking foods.

We would like to know how to call for funds, for CLIMATE LOSS AND DAMAGE funds and works.

Best regards,

**Leon Simwerayi**, DR Congo (*Association de Jeunes Visionnaires pour le Développement du Congo*, AJVDC Green Brigade/Congo), "survivor from Goma fighting"

### Second Email, February 17

Thank you for quick feedback, thank you for your prayers.

For more information on our work, we don't have many updates on the website; however, you can find some stories on our activities and projects at the links below.

These are some links, social media accounts, where you can read some of our stories and works:

- [www.ajvdc.com](http://www.ajvdc.com)
- <https://www.internationalcitiesofpeace.org/cities-listing/goma-d-r-congo/>

- <https://climateactivismineastafrica.wordpress.com/2020/01/31/the-green-brigade-from-goma-dr-congo/>

- <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/water-purification-stations-in-idps-camp-goma-drc/>

- <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/women-idps-humanitarian-reliefs-project-in-goma/>

- [https://web.facebook.com/leon.simwerayi?locale=fr\\_FR](https://web.facebook.com/leon.simwerayi?locale=fr_FR)

- <https://web.facebook.com/AjvdcAsbl>

- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/leon-simwerayi-81bba8281/>

We have not yet set a fundraising page. I'm thinking on how to set it on a Global Giving platform but we have experienced with few results on that way.

Here banks are not opened yet, we may use Western Union or WorldRemit.

Peace and Best regards,

Leon

**Continued on next page**

# OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

## Farming...a Love Language

### Ramblings from Your Farmers

Experiencing the world with Emmylou reminds us of how straightforward the rules of life once were: Be kind. Wash your hands. Respect others. Clean up after yourself. Play outside. Eat your vegetables.

Personally, we think these rules still apply to us adults, they just get lost in all the noise.

Much of the world these days doesn't really make sense. Modern life often makes us feel powerless and overwhelmed...

When we think back to our first years as farm workers, we are reminded of how captivating the rules of nature were to us. We became enthralled by this lifestyle that was so unconcerned about the newest things or what our hair looked like or finding careers that used those degrees we paid for...

As first generation farmers, we saw the world of working on the land with childlike eyes. The rhythm of the daylight told us when to work and when to rest. Magic took a tiny seed and encouraged it to become something totally new. Trash was miraculously turned into a rich and beautiful substance that nourished others and felt good between our toes...we learned to pay attention to what was really important and tune out the racket.

We know now that farming comes with its own set of complications as those simple rules collide with our upside down world. We have to constantly fight to just keep doing those things that we teach children and that the land so deeply knows. Through it all, farming has become our love language, our way to keep the things that make sense alive no matter what else is happening.

So let's be kind, wash our hands, respect others, clean up



after ourselves, play outside, eat our vegetables, and choose love.

We need you, friends; get involved this year and help this farm reach its full potential!

Peace and Carrots from your farmers,

Hannah, Joey & Crew

### Continuation from previous page

#### Third email, February 20

Thank you for sharing, and for feedback.

I can find in link all about what we are living now, our country stories with links to nowadays situation, causes and consequences of conflicts and wars.

A part of undergoing the consequences of these hard situations, our group is thinking on how to contribute to the stability of the country, trying to analyze the Root Cause of these wars. Most analysts, think tanks, realize that Congo has a rich reserve of raw materials that most people, countries, and businesses want to get, but we, specifically authorities, don't know how to make safe, clean, the chain

of supply of these natural resources. So, multinational businesses are supporting armed groups' looting, illegal exploitation of minerals, as main cause of wars.

We want to advocate a fair trade and clean trade, Business for Peace. To advocate for security chain of supply of critical raw materials for ecological transition industries and technology.

We are advocating for strong leadership at the state level in our country Congo.

We know the world needs Congo for Climate solutions.

Best regards,

Leon

## OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION



### Friend in Zimbabwe Wins Youth Impact Award

**Dear Iona,**

I am writing in appreciation for the support you have shown to me and the organization over the years.

I am proud to let you know that I have won an Award and I thought I should share it with you all so that you can share it with the rest of the world via your website. Please feel free to upload the photos and the message below to your websites. I am looking forward to working with you in the upcoming year and continuing with your support.

Here is the message as to why I was chosen for the award.

Jussa Kudherezera, the Director of the Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA), recently received the Youth Impact Award from The List Awards by Identities Media 2024 in recognition of his significant contributions to youth development in Manicaland. Over the

years, he has successfully facilitated the planting of more than 5,000 trees in Mutare District, campaigned against drug and substance abuse, and established school clubs focused on environmental initiatives. His community-oriented tree-planting efforts aim to combat climate change and promote environmental stewardship.

MAYA is committed to community development, social justice, and empowering marginalized youth to advocate for accountability and climate issues. The organization connects environmental and mental health topics with entrepreneurship to help steer young people away from substance abuse. The award highlights MAYA's impactful community initiatives and its partnerships with like-minded organizations.

Looking ahead to 2025, MAYA aims to expand its tree-planting efforts and

engage more schools and communities in climate action, leveraging a strong social media presence to resonate with tech-savvy youth.



## OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION



# Land Value Maps for Earth Rights Democracy Five Powerfully Informative Videos

By Alanna Hartzok  
Substack: February 18, 2025

A functional democracy needs basic informational truth in order to fulfill the promises of a just and fair society. A fundamental truth necessary to understand how to reverse the play of power that has led us to gross wealth inequality is to know who owns what land where (and its value) in our neighborhoods, towns, and cities. Transparent and detailed digital land maps give us this important data, tell us who pays what property taxes, and can model tax reform approaches that will keep our wealth in our communities. Here are five videos on Land Value Mapping.

### **Internal Colonialism, Land Value Maps, and Land Value Taxation**

<https://rumble.com/v2uxmuc-internal-colonialism-land-maps-and-land-value-taxation.html>

In this video Joshua Vincent, Director of the Center for the Study of Economics, presents land value maps of the City of Baltimore to people from Ireland, UK, Germany, India, the Philippines, Nigeria, Costa Rica, Canada, Australia, and the U.S. The presentation impressed everyone with the power and potential of this information technology to build movements for “Earth rights democracy” – a new form of democracy based on the equal right by birth to the Earth’s land and natural resources. Land mapping gives

exact and specific details of how land rent – the unearned income from land – currently flows out of low-income and impoverished areas where much of the land is owned by absentees and speculators and into the pockets of those who live in high-income areas or to private corporations.

Land value maps show in precise and stark detail the workings of a predatory economic system that can be viewed as “internal colonialism.” They can also show us how to solve this problem at its source.

### **Land Value Maps UK**

<https://rumble.com/v307ga2-landvalue-maps-uk-joshvincent-to-iu-executive.html>

The data and land value maps

## OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

Continuation from previous page

presented show how the land rent flows from the periphery of the UK especially from the poorer North to the London center and region. This information technology gives clear and precise visuals of how a “reverse Robin Hood” predatory land tenure system robs from the poor and gives to the rich. It also gives us the power to model how to keep the common wealth of our communities at home in our towns and cities in order to build strong local-based economies.

### Land Value Mapping Part 1

<https://rumble.com/v5jcceh-land-value-mapping-training-part-one.html>

People from all five continents participated in this first of three training sessions about the principles, power, and praxis of land value mapping. This is a powerful tool that can help us think critically about what harms or helps a community.

The contents of this video include a history of land mapping; Singapore land value and land use maps; Balti-

more and Estonia’s land value maps. In Baltimore, land value maps clearly show how absentee landowners pay more when shifting to land value taxes.

### Land Value Mapping Part 2

<https://rumble.com/v66m4as-land-value-mapping-with-joshua-vincent-part-2.html>

Joshua Vincent, Director, Center for the Study of Economics describes the purpose of land value mapping:

(1) Convey Information, (2) Highlight a Problem, (3) Tell a Story, and (4) Propose Solutions

**Case Studies:** Danville, Virginia, USA and New Zealand Indigenous Land Rights.

Who owns your neighborhood? Importance of knowing.

### Land Value Mapping Part 3

<https://rumble.com/v6bw8p4-landvaluemappingpart-3.html>

Presented by Joshua Vincent, Director of the Center for the Study of

Economics and Cristhian Areas from Nicaragua, now completing his thesis at the University of Peace in Costa Rica.

**Case Studies:** Baltimore, Maryland, USA and Upala, Costa Rica, an impoverished region where small farmer land has been increasingly bought up by agribusiness corporations. Land value mapping details what exactly is happening there, who owns what land and its value, and to indicate how a tax shift to land value tax (commons rent) would help to establish small farms for regenerative local agriculture.

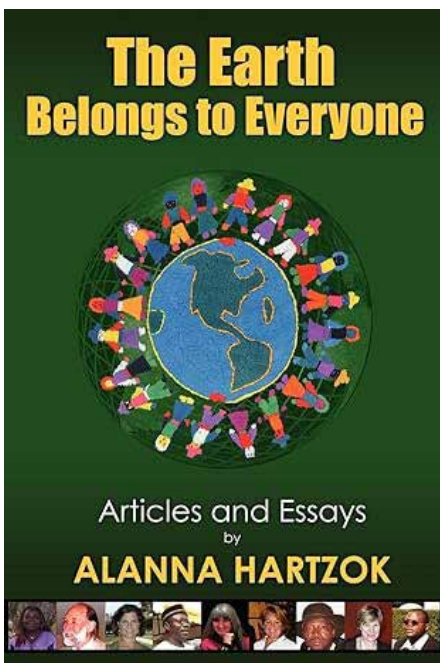
For more see the International Union for Land Value Taxation here: <https://theiu.org/>

\* \* \*

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**Source:** [AlannaHartzok.substack.com](https://alannahartzok.substack.com)

## World-Changing Book: *The Earth Belongs to Everyone*



*The Earth Belongs to Everyone: Articles & Essays* by Alanna Hartzok, is published by The Institute for Economic Democracy Press & Earth Rights Institute. Alanna Hartzok, co-director of Earth Rights Institute, sets forth the vision and policy foundation for no less than a new form of democracy – “Earth rights democracy.” Following an introduction containing glimpses of the author’s fascinating journey through life, this compilation of her articles and essays describes how to establish political-economic systems based on the human right to the planet as a birthright. Her main point is that Earth rights democracy is an essential ethical basis necessary to secure other economic human rights and to create a world of peace and plenty for all. She places this core perspective into an integrated local-to-global framework that balances the need for global cooperation with the necessity for building demilitarized, decentralized, and sustainable local-based economies.

In *The Earth Belongs to Everyone* you will learn how the Earth rights ethic can be realized through fundamental yet practical reforms in public finance policy based on integrating two primary trains of the policy of “land rent for the people” as advocated by Thomas Paine, Henry George, and other classical and current economic thinkers, and recent movements for “green” polluter-pay type taxes.

Successful working examples of the Earth rights approach to public finance are

**Continued on next page**

## OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION

Continuation from previous page



The Earth Belongs to Everyone is featured at The International Union for Land Value Taxation website, [theiu.org](http://theiu.org), and her book is available there to download. Photo: [theiu.org](http://theiu.org)

found throughout the book.

*The Earth Belongs to Everyone* presents a large and hopeful worldview with profound possibilities for transformational action for peace, economic justice, and environmental restoration.

**Themes:** Democracy, Earth Rights and the Next Economy; Sharing Our Common Heritage; Land for People, Not for Profit; Financing Local to Global Public Goods; Women, Earth, and Economic Power; Restructuring Economic Relationships; Economics of War and Peace.

### What others are saying about

#### *The Earth Belongs to Everyone*

*“More and more people are convinced that the only way to a just, prosperous, and ecologically sustainable future is to share the value of Earth’s resources more fairly. One of*

*the many merits of Alanna Hartzok’s collection of writings is to ground that conviction in practical proposals. She inspires us to do something about it.”*

~ James Robertson, author, *The New Economics of Sustainable Development*, co-founder, The Other Economic Summit and the New Economics Foundation; consultant, European Commission, London

*“Alanna Hartzok has deeply researched tax issues with equity and ecological-sustainability firmly in mind. This book is a storehouse of wisdom and insights on these and many broader issues relating economics to the larger planetary ecology.”* ~ Hazel Henderson, author, *Beyond Globalization and Building a Win-Win World*, member, President’s Commission on Sustainable Development; founder, Ethical Markets TV

*“There are many of your articles which I dearly want to publish. The Share the World’s Resources audience is vast and certainly your message through your articles will be most welcome by our readers and members around the world.”* ~ Mohammed Mesbahi, Chair and Founder, Share the World’s Resources, London

*“Alanna Hartzok’s grasp of land issues is truly impressive. A real intellectual feast. I have learned so much from her work and writings.”* ~ Col. Thomas Dempsey, Director of African Studies, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

To order a hard copy of the book for \$20 including postage and handling in the U.S., contact Alanna at [alanna-hartzok@gmail.com](mailto:alanna-hartzok@gmail.com) or 717-357-7817.

**Source:** [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

**Life is a gift that is given and will be taken. How we choose to spend our time here is our gift to life. It is our way of saying “thank you life” for the gift.**

~ Imuetinyan Ugiagbe ~

# IONA IN ACTION



## Stop the Overdevelopment of Brick! Proposed Project at 100 Drum Point Road

**5.34 acres of woods on Drum Point Road** are in danger of being completely cleared and replaced by a **60-unit, 3-story, multi-family housing complex**. The Ramani Group, located out of Roselle Park, NJ, is seeking approval of a use variance from the township of Brick to demolish the woods and proceed with their project.

The developer has made various controversial claims, such as the complex would not significantly contribute to our already congested roadways and has refused to perform an air quality test. As Brick residents, the possibility of this development is deeply concerning. The woods act as a natural buffer to mitigate flooding, reduce air pollution, and provide a natural habitat for many animals.

If this proposal gets approved, what is to stop future developments such as this from coming to Brick taking more of our natural woodlands and further contributing to traffic issues??

**This development must be stopped!**

Please spread the word, sign and share our petition,  
and help us raise funds for legal counsel.

**[Donate Here](https://gofund.me/37e06276)**

**<https://gofund.me/37e06276>**



**[Sign the Petition Here](http://www.change.org/100DrumPointWoods)**

**[www.change.org/100DrumPointWoods](http://www.change.org/100DrumPointWoods)**



Show support in-person by attending the next Brick Board of Adjustment Meeting!

**April 10, 7pm, 401 Chambers Bridge Rd.**



## IONA IN ACTION

**Letter to the Editor** [Note from Iona: I have not yet sent this to other newspapers.]

There is something I want the world to know. We need trees more than anything to help stabilize our climate. More than solar, more than wind, more than EVs. These technologies require further destruction of the environment.

Trees have no political party, so this must not become a political issue. We all have a role to play in our neighborhoods.

Trees (and birds who live in them) are at risk everywhere, not only because of fires, winds, floods, etc., but because many people make no effort to save large, existing trees in their rush to develop land to make as much money as possible.

Here in Brick, there is a group of residents who are fighting to save five acres of woods at 100 Drum Point Road from being torn down so a 60-unit, 3-story-high, multi-family complex can be erected in its place. They are concerned that if the project gets approved as it is, the air quality and traffic will be negatively impacted and the woods will be gone. I offered my help after discovering their GoFundMe page. [<https://www.gofundme.com/f/protect-brick-stop-overdevelopment-now>] Then I found and signed the petition at <https://chn9.it/92YrCpkmp> and fired off a letter to the woman who started it (Heather Cohen) telling her I'd like to help.

I didn't know much about planning and zoning so I started reading "An Outline of the Fundamentals of Zoning and Planning for Land Use Boards" at <https://www.njlm.org/Archive/ViewFile/Item/1566>. When someone wants to do a project different from what the zoning ordinance requires, they go to the Board of Adjustment and apply for a variance. This document states: "No variance may be granted unless the Board finds that it can be granted (a) without substantial detriment to the public good, and (b) it will not substantially impair the intent and the purpose of the zone plan and zoning ordinance."

The variances this project are requesting are key and why neighbors do not feeling that this development will improve our woods or neighborhood -- d variance/use variance and density variance. This property is zoned "Village" and this development would counteract the effect of that particular zone established by the municipality of Brick.

In the Drum Point Road case, two public hearings with the Brick Board of Adjustment have been held so far. During those hearings, testimony had been heard from both the civil engineer and the traffic engineer, though the public only had the opportunity to question the traffic engineer thus far and their questions and the answers they were given were limited to three minutes. The next hearing is April 10 at 7 pm in the municipal building. This is a great opportunity for people to get educated about how things work in Brick when a developer submits plans to change a zoning ordinance.

People everywhere need to learn more about land use regulations, attend hearings, ask questions, make comments, and give voice to the voiceless. Trees need human eyes and ears and actions to protect them.

Sincerely yours,

Iona Conner, Brick NJ 08723



100 Drum Point Road. The woods in the center of this photo are what people are working to try to save. Photo: Google Earth via Brick Shoreline



## Messages from Our Friends

Your newspaper looks terrific, and I am pleased that the offshore wind farm was beaten down! Keep up the good work, Iona!

The video is also outstanding. It's gratifying to see these successful projects. [[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hzRML27jGccMIZZ8V\\_oJhpN0rDiKrg7G/view?usp=sharin](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hzRML27jGccMIZZ8V_oJhpN0rDiKrg7G/view?usp=sharin)]

**David Hunter Bishop**, Ecuador

You can't imagine the impact you are making in many lives by sharing our African stories.

You have really played a great part in making our stories known... thank you so much for your kindness and truthfulness.

**Duke Ajuma**, Nigeria

Thank you for sharing your experience at the public meeting regarding the developer's plan to clearcut the woods and your passion for speaking up for the environment. It's clear that you are deeply committed to advocating for the preservation of natural resources and fighting against climate change, even staying up late into the night pondering on ways to make a difference.

The dynamics of property rights versus community interests can be complex and challenging, especially in cases like the one you described where a developer's plans may have significant environmental implications. Your idea to track the legal process for the site and understand the potential outcomes is a proactive step towards seeking justice and protecting the interests of the community and the environment.

**Ekwe Chiwundu Charles**, Nigeria

I just finished your newspaper. I especially enjoyed reading the

articles about Friends in Action! And the preceding article on local farms versus corporate. Very important in these times to have healthy food.

The article was very interesting about the 28 endangered animals, from dragonflies to snakes even.

**Linda L.**, Idaho USA

I just wanted you to be aware of the situation, but your more recent emails were about the DRC anyway.

I think it's good to have a short summary of news anyway. People may want to know what's happening in DRC as far as human rights and environment. This goes along with what's happening to people we know.

I find this situation complex and unfamiliar but what is most disturbing to me is that outside actors may be supporting it to gain access to minerals.

I really am beginning to dislike the tech sector for the demands it is making for minerals and for energy to run AI.

All I know about these conflicts is they've been going on for a long time and have involved a lot of countries and a lot of killings. I wish Africa had an equivalent of the European Union dedicated to stability and development.

**Bill Boteler**, Maryland USA

Greetings from SCOPE Kenya. Many thanks for your email and for sharing the video.

[[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hzRML27jGccMIZZ8V\\_oJhpN0rDiKrg7G/view?usp=sharin](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hzRML27jGccMIZZ8V_oJhpN0rDiKrg7G/view?usp=sharin)]  
I was very happy to read the story about our work in your last publication and appreciated you so much for sharing the video. I am sure

that the videos and stories from our work always inspire others.

Thank you so much for the support.

With Kind Regards,

**John Macharia**

National Coordinator  
SCOPE KENYA

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Face Book: <https://www.facebook.com/scopekenya2/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/scopekenya1>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/scopekenya/?hl=en>

Linkedin: <https://ke.linkedin.com/in/scope-kenya-3a86651b3>

Promoting Practical Agroecology Education in Schools to reconnect children with Nature, healthy lifestyle & environmental stewardship.

The truth is that there is steady progress since the day Amos started continuing his medication Mom. We have not to worry about his medical challenges if it keeps continuous.

I know you have done more than enough in this situation. I have all the prayers upon too. Thanks for being a good writer and am glad Amos learnt a lot from you in terms of writing. You have surely given us energy and strength when we were truly down. Am sorry about your phone, hopefully you didn't lose most of your documents that you had there. And I wish the new ones keep safe.

Thank you Mom. For this offer of publishing my happiness to the whole world of what people have done for us with you being the center of all.

All the best Mom.

**Sheirah Akamushaba** (Amos's wife), Uganda

Continued on next page

# Messages from Our Friends

Continuation from previous page

## Equinox Earth Day Global Bell Ringing Zoom! You are invited to join!

The original Earth Day was dreamed up by a visionary man named John McConnell in order to foster worldwide participation in the peaceful care of Earth and to promote the **annual celebration of Earth Day on the March Equinox**. Resolutions were passed by the City of San Francisco and other organizations declaring Earth Day on the March Equinox, the day of equipoise. But people planning for an Environmental Teach-In heard McConnell talk about Earth Day at the United Nations and they grabbed the term, hence the April 22 date.

The Earth Society Foundation, founded by McConnell and Margaret Meade, has celebrated the **original Equinox Earth Day** with the ceremonial ringing of the

Peace Bell at the United Nations nearly every one of the past 50 years.

Alas, left out of Earth Day celebrations was the **Sharing of Earth as McConnell also advocated for "Earth rights."** In 1968 McConnell wrote his "**Planetary Inheritance Declaration**" concerning the "rights and responsibilities of all people with respect to Earth's land, sea, minerals, oil, and other natural resources." He said that the Earth should be fairly shared as the equal birthright of all people.

**Equinox Earth Day is a great time to do education and outreach about both caring for and sharing the Earth.** You are hereby invited to join the Equinox Global Bell Ringing zoom when people worldwide will join together in ringing bells at the exact moment of equinox which is **5:01 am EST on March 20**. Below you will find a

world map that gives the times in other states and countries. You can register for the **Equinox Global Bell Ringing zoom** which will include 20 speakers during the 90 minutes on the Earth Society Foundation website here: Please put the date, time (March 20 4:30 – 6:00 am EST) and zoom link on your calendar.

**The link for the Equinox Global Bell Ringing zoom is:**

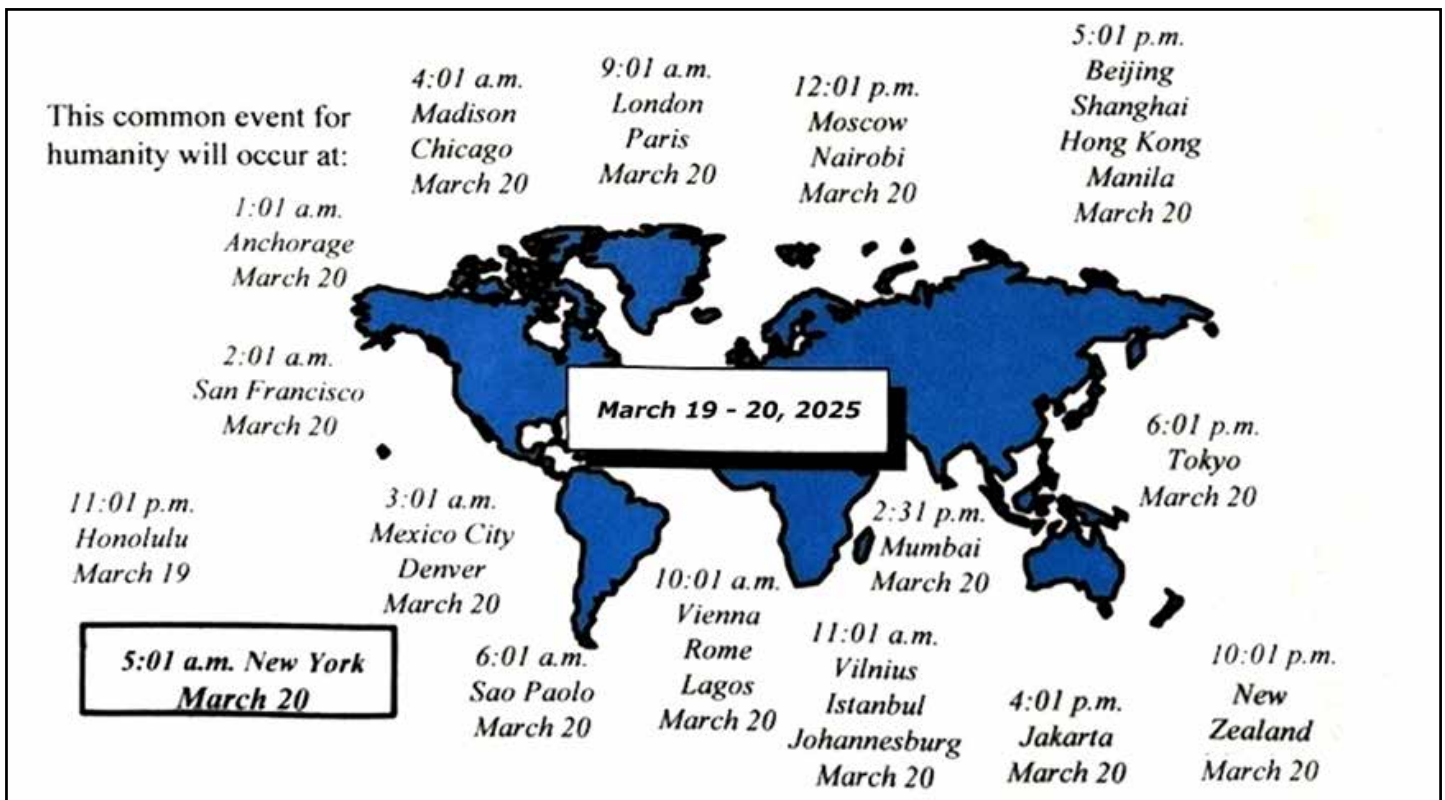
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86188402327?pwd=dhIkMkGMtMMqDCrOAUcyWcO6aW1xB.1>

Meeting ID: 861 8840 2327  
Passcode: 072421


Here is Ed Dodson's interesting power point wherein he tells the story of John McConnell, Equinox Earth Day and the Earth rights economics of peace connection:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhxO9W7E-tw>

You can check your time at <https://www.timeanddate.com>.



# NJ Vs. Trump: Where Legal Challenges On Funding, Federal Buyout Stand as of 2/12/25

By Michelle Rotuno-Johnson, excerpt  
Brick Patch: February 12, 2025 

The state Attorney General has joined in multiple lawsuits seeking to challenge the president's executive orders and policies.

NEW JERSEY – As President Donald Trump continues unveiling new executive orders and policy proposals, New Jersey is one of the states challenging the limits of his executive power in federal court.

New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin and a coalition of other Democratic attorneys general have sought to block the president's attempts to freeze certain federal funding, undermine birthright citizenship, and push out government workers.

The latest of these lawsuits challenges funding cuts for universities and research institutions, which would affect both public and private schools in the Garden State.

In total, more than 50 lawsuits have already been filed against the Trump Administration – including by FBI agents who fear they're being purged for political reasons, and families who are concerned about new limitations on healthcare for transgender youth.

It's unclear which legal battles will reach the U.S. Supreme Court, where justices can choose what cases to consider.

Here is a look at the five lawsuits that New Jersey is involved with, and where they stand in federal court.

## Birthright Citizenship

On Inauguration Day, Trump issued an order excluding the following people from automatic citizenship: those

whose mothers were not legally in the United States and whose fathers were not U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents; people whose mothers were in the country legally but on a temporary basis and whose fathers were not citizens or legal permanent residents.

Platkin and the others challenged this order, saying it violates the constitutional rights of children born in the United States under the Fourteenth Amendment.

- When was the case filed? January 21
- Latest updates: U.S. District Judge John Coughenour blocked the executive order on Thursday.

## Freezing Federal Funding

Trump ordered an abrupt pause on trillions of dollars in grants and federal loans in the first week of his presidency, as his administration conducted an ideological review of spending. A subsequent lawsuit said this action was illegal, as Congress had already authorized the funding, and that it would disrupt day-to-day life for many New Jerseyans.

- When was the case filed? January 28
- Latest updates: On Monday, U.S. District Court Judge John McConnell told the Trump administration it must immediately restore the frozen funding.

## Federal Employee Buyout

The Office of Budget and Personnel Management dubbed this plan the "Fork in the Road" just two weeks ago, offering full pay and benefits until September for any federal employee who accepted a deferred resignation by February 6.

The coalition of attorneys general joined in a lawsuit that three federal unions filed against the administration, with Platkin calling the buyout a "scam" that is "nothing more than an

attempt to intimidate public servants out of their jobs."

- When was the case filed? February 4
- Latest updates: U.S. District Judge George O'Toole Jr. paused Trump's plan on Thursday.

## DOGE Access to Personal Records

States sued to stop Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency from accessing the Treasury's payment system, saying it put Americans' financial security and personal information at risk. This was several days after the Department allowed "special government employees" access to a critical payment system.

- When was the case filed? February 7
- Latest updates: U.S. District Judge Paul Engelmayer ordered a temporary restraining order blocking DOGE from accessing Treasury Department payment systems on February 8.

## Cuts to Medical Research

On Friday, the National Institutes of Health announced a cut to its "indirect cost" reimbursements at public health research institutions across the country, which would affect clinical trials and other medical research. New Jersey colleges and universities that would be impacted include Rutgers University, Rowan University, Princeton University, The College of New Jersey, and others, Platkin said.

- When was the case filed? February 10
- Latest updates: U.S. District Judge Angel Kelley granted a temporary restraining order halting the cuts.

This article contains reporting from the Associated Press.

**Source:** <https://patch.com/new-jersey/brick/s/j5f13/nj-vs-trump-where-legal-challenges-on-funding-federal-buyout-stand>