

**Brian Tokar**, of East Montpelier, is a lecturer in environmental studies at the University of Vermont and a board member of 350Vermont and the Institute for Social Ecology. He earned a master's degree in biophysics from Harvard University.

**Why did you agree to serve on this committee?**

As a generally secular person of Jewish background, I have been greatly inspired by Pope Francis' climate encyclical, "Laudato Si'," and view it as one of the most important and inspired statements ever written that links the scientific, moral and social imperatives raised by the global climate crisis.

**What specific concerns do you have about the wellbeing of the earth, "our common home?"**

Our own wellbeing has always been intimately tied to the health of the land, water and air as well as the entire web of life on the earth. The destabilization of the earth's climate system, largely due to the excessive combustion of fossil fuels, seriously threatens the entire web of life.

**What message do you want to convey about care of the earth?**

It is our responsibility as a species and as an ethical community to care for the earth as we care for each other. Further, climate justice teaches us that people around the world who are least responsible for the pollution that damages the climate system have long experienced the most severe effects of unstable weather and the increasingly severe cycles of droughts, floods and wildfires. The climate crisis is a global emergency, and protecting the future of life on the earth has become humanity's most urgent calling.

**What do you say to people who do not understand/believe the seriousness of the situation of the earth?**

I'm generally baffled by the willful disregard in some contemporary circles for the most essential understandings of science and of social ethics. Our educational efforts to mend this problem need to probe people's deepest values and also appeal to reason, wherever possible.

**What motivates you in your work to protect our earth?**

With a background in the sciences as well as in social ecology, I view nothing as more important. I also believe that our work to protect the earth taps deeply into our greatest potential as human beings and helps us understand how we can work together to create a more ecological, humane and compassionate society.