

## Student Call to Action

At this very moment, we are knee-deep in the sixth mass extinction, and the only one in Earth's history to be caused by humans. About 150 species go extinct every day, nearly 1,000 times the rate it would be, had humans not invaded every stretch of our planet. With only 4% of our state's land and water conserved, 483 Illinois species are now threatened or endangered, and we have a long way to go to fix where we are today. However, with humans creating this issue, humans have the power to reverse it. What the citizens of Illinois need to understand is what the Task Force is about to do now, and in the coming months is one of the state's last chances to jump on the global 30x30 initiative and make a considerable, positive impact.

Amidst the troubling statistics, we as an extension of the youth of Illinois hope our community sees the potential for where we are headed. Through the task force, we have the opportunity to lead the way in protecting our country's natural gifts now and in the future, but in order to do that, we must be clear on one thing: unity and collaboration have to be at the center of every decision, discussion, and solution. Every citizen of Illinois's voice and perspective are incredibly valuable not only to us but to forming the better future we all desire. As task force leaders, we urge every individual to engage in the discussion regarding what 30x30 will look like in your community and in the state at large through the task force's system, in order to create the best and boldest solution for all. Our core value of collaboration will all Illinoisians is a necessity to creating the future the youth of our world deserve. Not only do we have to have a passion for our planet, but we also have to have a passion for each other, valuing the needs of all sectors and industries. If we don't have that, we just won't make it.

We would like to acknowledge one final concern. It is easy when working on a movement with such dire consequences to point fingers or place blame. But we want to challenge you all to move away from seeing our obstacles as enemies, because what we are facing isn't just one person or group, it is hundreds of years of apathy toward our planet's gifts that we are called to repair. We can't expect to change the behaviors and beliefs of 12 million people, but we can spend every moment we have together trying to help them find their way to loving and supporting the future of our planet.

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