

North Shore Art Throb  
A Modern Day Moses  
February 10, 2012  
By [eye witness](#)

Most of us know him from the climate change fight movement [350.org](#), but Bill McKibben is a renowned writer with 14 books under his belt—the debut being *The End of Nature*, widely considered the first book on climate change for general audiences.

On Thursday, I saw him speak at Endicott College. Unlike Al Gore with his well-known climate change presentation, listening to McKibben speak is always fresh because he easily weaves news into discussion of his movement, the people's movement, [350.org](#). A writer and environmental advocate, I am drawn to him like a moth to light.

The reality is as the movement to address climate change factors gains momentum, the challenges of a changing climate—both political and weather-related devastations—multiply. The fear is that bottomless supplies of these forces exist, and they will overwhelm us, and Earth, together.

McKibben came to Beverly to impress upon us the “pace” and “scale” for which we are dealing with the rate of climate change since he wrote his first book 23 years ago. At that time, he said, we knew essentially all the facts of climate change—“what we didn't know was how hard and how fast this was going to pinch.”

Acknowledging his role as “a professional bummer out,” he proceeded to give profound evidence of recent events around the world that bear evidence to the scientific truth that we, as human beings, have simply blazed our own trail out of the cushy, safe 10,000 year epoch of climate stability known as the *Holocene*.

“We've loaded the dice,” McKibben said. Fossil fuel combustion is causing Earth's temperature to rise—1 degree so far—and thus, we're losing food, vast stores of grain, at a rate of 10 percent per degree, he said. Earth also has four percent more humidity in the atmosphere—a significant variable in a changing global hydrological cycle. McKibben quipped that beings from other planets might think that we are trying to create “a mosquito ranch!” He told of a planet on a roller coaster of droughts and flood with an ocean turning to acid and land plagued with perfect firestorms and shattered rain records. “Things are changing and changing very fast and very dangerously,” he said.

McKibben also discussed political will—Congress's “perfect bipartisan record of accomplishing nothing”—and noted that Exxon recently reported earnings of \$41 billion. “More money than any company in the history of money,” he said.

I've decided that there are just those who simple don't see climate change the way I do not see how tires and rims make or break the look of a car.

How can we help the politicians see what we see and resist the fossil fuel industries screaming in their ears and lining their pockets? Don Nadeau of Salem asked him how we could compete with the fossil fuel industries' lobbyists and money, and McKibben responded with something on par with Moses to the Israelites. “*Pharaoh can take your homes... your very lives...but he cannot take your faith,*” said Moses in Dreamworks *Prince of Egypt*. McKibben, our voice, implored us to work: “what other currencies can you operate on?” Chief among them are our numbers, he said.

Join the codifying movement at [350.org](#). Next week the continued fight to stop construction of the Keystone XL pipeline—a deadly track line that would run from the Tar Sands of Alberta, Canada to refineries in the Gulf Coast—requires 1 million signatures.

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