

Dear Caroline Rush and the British Fashion Council,

Last season, you told us that you would declare a climate emergency and yet no emergency action has been taken. Since then, we have witnessed in real time, the signs of irreversible climate and ecological breakdown; most recently, unprecedented fires in Australia and floods in Jakarta.

The Bank of England is warning business leaders that they will go out of business unless they make the radical changes needed. According to the UN, 2020 is the 'make or break year.' We are heading towards a likely 3.2C of global heating, rendering much of our planet uninhabitable in the coming decades. And to limit warming to below 1.5C now requires a 15% cut in emissions annually.

And yet, this February, the global Fashion Weeks convene again – to display the clothes the industry wants us to wear for Autumn/Winter 2020-21. As we exceed the UN 2020 deadline, the bi-annual parades of excess of global fashion weeks are rendered completely irrelevant and out of touch.

To produce London Fashion Week, you receive public funding from our government. As citizens, it is our responsibility to question the best use of public funds, especially when we are in a crisis to which this industry has contributed.

Some fashion weeks, and brands participating, are trying to radically transform fashion culture and systems. London is home to the cutting edge of sustainable and ethical design, and yet, London Fashion Week lags behind. And despite having an active Political Engagement Programme, you have done almost nothing to lobby for environmental policies, without which a transition with the urgency we need is simply impossible.

We have all failed but now radical leadership is required. We need you, the British Fashion Council, as appointed industry administrators, to find the power and courage to centre a visionary process and protocol, without delay.

The time has run out for incremental change. For all life on earth, you must act now with the goal of halting the loss of biodiversity, drastically reducing carbon emissions and ending the exploitation that this industry is responsible for. We demand that you convene the industry to catalyse a bold transformation, re-designing the practice and culture of clothing and self-expression to be regenerative, with social and environmental justice and wellbeing at its core.

We demand that you, the British Fashion Council:

1. TELL THE TRUTH. THIS SYSTEM IS BROKEN.

Use your platform to Tell The Truth about the climate, ecological and humanitarian emergency. Call on stakeholders to urgently re-imagine this industry, addressing its very foundations: obsolescence, overproduction, and exploitation.

2. ACT NOW. RE-DESIGN THE SYSTEM.

With the view to cancel September 2020 fashion week and transform the British Fashion Council's purpose in accordance with scientific truths and social needs, immediately start work on an emergency action plan that aids stakeholders through change.

Informed by and reporting to a radically inclusive, non-hierarchical People's Assembly containing a cross section of industry stakeholders, the citizens it serves, those subject to its effects, and the youth, we urge you to re-design how the British Fashion Council transmits and supports the culture and practice of clothing and self-expression.

3. DEMAND URGENT CHANGE. WHERE IS THE GOVERNMENT?

Use your Political Engagement Programme, and unite the industry, to pressure the government to pass the Three Demands Bill for a just transition of the UK to net zero by 2025; and propose the legislation needed to stop the fashion industry's exploitation of planet, people and animals. We have enclosed a copy of the Three Demands Bill for your information.

Fashion is a powerful cultural force, and with that comes great responsibility. And so, as time is running out, we hope that you will meet our demands. If you fail to do what's necessary to protect all life, Extinction Rebellion will continue to build pressure.

Life on Earth, all our futures, all our children's futures and those suffering today, depend on the action we take now. The time for creativity is more needed than ever.

We would like a reply to this letter before London Fashion Week that confirms your commitment to our demands.

In love and in rage,

Extinction Rebellion, Centre for Sustainable Fashion, University of the Arts London, Fashion and Textile Research Centre, Nottingham Trent University, Labour Behind The Label, The Sustainable Angle, TRAIID, VIN+OMI, Caryn Franklin MBE, Livia Firth, Eco-Age, Lynne Franks OBE, Martina Spetlova - designer, Safia Minney MBE FRSA, REAL Sustainability Centre, Simone Cipriani, Ethical Fashion Initiative.