

My Window by Dean Tormey, Hartland High School, May 2026

As far back as I can remember. I could spend hours outside swimming, playing sports, exploring the forest, and hiking trails. Nature was always a place that felt steady, familiar, and alive. I always wanted to be part of a world instead of watching it through my window.

As I have grown up and my scope has widened there have been shifts everywhere. Summers have been hotter, storms have been stronger, and the air I breathe has grown less pure.

I have come to find these changes aren't random. They are a culmination of poor decision making.

The hard truth is that my generation sees all of this. Advances in technology and social media have allowed us to see the changes and the impact our own decisions have had on a global scale. Many of us are exposed to deforestation, water pollution, air pollution, and increasingly severe weather. The people of tomorrow are constantly witnessing this through their window.

With a planet being pushed to its limits we are told to recycle our plastic and stay optimistic while long term planning gets tossed aside for short term economic gain. Few are willing to take a look outside their window and actually see what is/will happen to our planet.

Part of the issue of the climate crisis is lack of education.

A country cannot thrive without an educated people, not just academically educated but also politically educated people. People who understand how policy works, how economies function, how environmental protections are created, and how they can be dismantled. When people understand these systems they can be held accountable and fixed. They can look outside their window and see how a policy can protect a forest or burn it down.

Unfortunately, many of the systems we rely on are not built to prioritize the people. They often prioritize corporations, short term profits, and economic models that treat the planet and people as disposable.

This is why governmental influence matters, not to control people but to protect them. To have a system that pushes sustainable energy, creates clean technology, that funds and brings education, research, and most importantly builds an economy that doesn't sacrifice the future for our present.

For a moment imagine a country that is the golden standard of sustainability. Its people have built an extremely educated populace that understands how their government works, how their economy works, and how the planet works. They have built up infrastructure that relies on sustainable energy as the backbone of their success. A country where their goal in life isn't survival but instead fulfillment. A society where people look out their window on a planet that leaves meaningful lives that sustains itself for generations.

As a people we need to take time to look out of our window.

Sadly, this can't be done by one person or even just a few. We all need to work together to be the change that our planet so desperately needs.

So, the next time that you take a look out of your window, look long and hard because what you see might not be there tomorrow if we don't all take action today.

As a generation that knows too much and does too little, our knowledge is our strength and not our burden. It is what pushes us to speak, to organize, to vote, and to build a world where we can look out of our windows and be proud.

Our planet isn't dying, it's being killed, but this won't happen if we take action. Our planet. Our power. Our future. And we are not giving any of them up.

