

Dear Caroline Rush and the BFC,

We have alerted you to the crisis. We have been grateful for your willingness to know the truth and explore possibilities for change. Yet, the status quo remains. It is our duty as citizens, to say enough is enough. Business as usual means the end of life. Our children's future is at stake.

We beg you to cancel London Fashion Week in respect to this crisis. We ask that if the industry convene, this is for crisis talks and as a platform to declare emergency and face the truth following the footsteps of The Tate and Culture Declares.

With all due respect to the sustainability initiatives of the BFC, we, Extinction Rebellion, cannot stand by this parade of excess whilst the natural world is being taken from beneath our feet. We must consider how fashion can be reborn as a cultural medium with a regenerative effect on all people, planet, animals and generations to come.

How can the influence of fashion be used to tell the world to stop consuming that which they don't need and demand systemic change?

London Fashion Week sets a global precedent. It creates the desire that results in the consumption of fast fashion and beyond. Fashion should be a cultural signifier of our times, and yet the industry still adheres to an archaic system of seasonal fashion, adding pressure to relentlessly create new fashion from new materials. The embodied emissions, as well as damaging cultural resonance of fashion weeks, is not something the planet can afford. In the wake of the world wars, countries worked together to marshal resources for the good of all people. In the context of war, ostentatious dress was culturally frowned upon, but brilliant new aesthetics were born as a result. This is not the end of the world, nor the end of creativity but the need to radically transform.

Climate and ecological breakdown will wreak economic and social havoc. The BFC has a responsibility to prepare the industry to adapt for what is to come to protect lives. But if the BFC is the first major fashion week to put an end to a harmful system, this is an opportunity to be the vanguard of the industry. We call on the British fashion industry to lead the way and do what's right.

The cancellation of Stockholm Fashion Week demonstrates change is possible. Jennie Rosén, CEO of the Swedish Fashion Council says, "We need to put the past to rest and stimulate the development of a platform that is relevant for today's fashion industry (and) focus on creating tools and platforms in order to support and prepare the industry for the future."

We have disruptive actions planned during LFW and we will be ending LFW with a funeral finale which will soberly pay respect to the legacy of LFW and put it to rest forevermore. We must pause and reflect on the lives being lost. We sincerely call on you to do the same.

There is no longer time for incremental change. The UN Secretary General warned us that humanity faces a 'direct existential threat' if we do not change course by 2020. We are now less than one season away and the radical action needed to avoid runaway climate breakdown and ecological collapse has not yet begun. With every day of inaction, the risk grows and so does the death toll, bringing us closer to extinction. Death and destruction from ecocide is happening now. We cannot rely on politicians alone. We need culture to lead change.

We do not take our demand lightly. We understand the growth-seeking economic systems that drive the fashion industry. We recognise that there are millions of people around the world who depend on fashion for their livelihoods. But we will not significantly mitigate this crisis without total systemic transformation. We must find a way to do what is necessary, not to do what we can within current systems. The planet is crumbling under our weight and the people already paying the highest price are those workers who are being exploited for profit but who have done the least damage. It is time for the BFC to bring the industry back to the drawing board. For the sake of humanity and all life on earth, we must tell the truth and act now.

We are supported by Maria Chenoweth, CEO of Traid and Safia Minney, MBE, Founder, People Tree, Author, Adviser & Campaigner. Their powerful statements are below.

As always, we are happy to discuss the contents of this letter at your nearest convenience and work out a route forward.

With love and rage,
EXTINCTION REBELLION

“Stopping London Fashion Week sends the urgent message that fashion as know it needs to change NOW! Every fashion brand needs to put everything through the climate lens and campaign harder to tell the public to stop buying cr*p that is killing the planet and future generations.”

Safia Minney, MBE, Founder, People Tree, Author, Adviser & Campaigner

“UK shoppers consume more clothes than any other country in Europe.

We buy a staggering 38 million new garments every week. Globally, clothing production creates 1.2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions every year while contaminating our oceans with plastic microfibres and depleting our soil with chemical pesticides and fertilisers. Ending the fashion industry's model of continuous growth is critical for people and planet. That's why TRAIID is supporting this call to cancel London Fashion Week.”

Maria Chenoweth, CEO of Traid