Science Museum of Minnesota Institutional Position Statements

Statement on Climate Change

Minnesota is warming slowly but surely: Over the past 130 years, our state has warmed by nearly three degrees while averaging more than three inches of additional annual rainfall. And although an extra three degrees may sound minor (and even welcome to Minnesotans at times!), its negative impact is not minor. Climate change is real, and so are the challenges it represents. As a society, we have the power to help address these challenges. The Science Museum of Minnesota is committed to sharing what science tells us to help you stay informed about our changing climate. From the environmental research happening every day at our St. Croix Watershed Research Station to the creative strategies that we are employing to mitigate the effects of our warming climate, we are using science to find solutions.

Science Museum of Minnesota's Climate Change Statement

Human-caused climate change is real. It is urgent. And it is solvable through courageous action informed by science.

Activities such as land use, the burning of fossil fuels, and the clearing of forests are releasing large amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These gases are warming and destabilizing our climate, increasing the frequency of extreme weather events, and causing sea levels to rise and oceans to acidify. These changes place great stress on our ecosystems, even here in Minnesota. They affect all of us—and they disproportionately impact communities of color, women, Indigenous groups, and people with limited wealth.

With our exhibitions, education programs, research and collections, leadership, policies, and practices, the Science Museum of Minnesota commits to being a resource on climate change and a hub for climate action. We will amplify collective solutions that ease the impacts of the climate crisis and that enable us all to imagine, design, and realize a better future.

With our mission as our guide, we will:

- Inspire learning by sharing data, evidence, and stories from diverse perspectives, especially those of Indigenous cultures. We will develop learning opportunities about both the science of climate change and potential solutions, giving our audiences the tools to understand and take meaningful action.
- Inform policy by encouraging policymakers, businesses, and community leaders to make evidence-based decisions. We will lead by example, improving our own climate action work while advocating for climate-forward policies on local, national, and global scales.
- Improve lives by embracing climate justice and centering the needs of those most impacted by climate change, because most power lies in the hands of people who are

likely to suffer the least. We will demonstrate ways to reduce and eventually eliminate climate-altering emissions.

Tackling human-caused climate change is achievable. Remarkable innovations in how we power our society, raise our food, manage our forests, and sustain our fisheries have already demonstrated powerful economic, employment, equity, education, and environmental benefits. There's great potential for much more.

At the Science Museum of Minnesota, we commit to climate action. To do this, we will complete an organization-wide review and revision of our programs, practices, and policies each year, and we will make this information publicly available. Please join us in taking action. Together, we will create the change we want to see.

Statement on Evolution

Evolution is real. The theory of evolution is one of the most impactful concepts of modern science. It is supported by abundant evidence, observations, and testable hypotheses, allowing us to predict outcomes, changes, and impacts. The scientific theory of evolution is central to the Science Museum of Minnesota's work, forming the basis of our scientists' research on the natural world. As our climate warms and our planet faces enormous changes, harnessing the power of evolution is our best chance of making the world a livable place for everyone.

What is evolution? Evolution is the process of a population's gene pool changing over generations as a result of natural selection and other factors. If enough changes build up through time and populations become isolated from each other, new species can emerge. The scientific theory of evolution explains this process and answers the question of how Earth's biodiversity came to exist.

Why write a statement about evolution? A variety of interests have tried to undermine evolutionary theory and have spread misinformation. At the same time, evolutionary theory has been unethically used to justify deadly practices, such as racism, eugenics and genocide. As science educators, we have a responsibility to teach this fundamental concept that underpins many natural science fields. As an organization rooted in equity, we must work to ensure that biology is not used to support systems of oppression.

To further the Science Museum of Minnesota's vision of empowering everyone to use science to understand how our world works, we will:

- Inspire learning by sharing examples of evolution in action in our daily lives, from managing agriculture to understanding disease-causing microbes. We will continue to develop educational resources, programs, and exhibits that define and explain the different components of the evolutionary process.

- Inform policy by working with education systems at many levels to ensure that all learners in Minnesota understand evolutionary theory and can apply it in ways that serve all people. We will advocate against policies that seek to divide and discriminate against groups of humans based on harmful interpretations of evolutionary theory.
- Improve lives by creating spaces and programs that support reflection and dialogue about evolution. By building a strong understanding of what evolution is and is not, we will equip people to reject discrimination that claims to be based in scientific fact and to use evolutionary theory to solve problems.

Humanity is now the dominant agent of ecosystem change on Earth. A firm grasp of evolution is vital in anticipating how our planet-altering activities will impact biodiversity and, as a result, our lived experiences. Most importantly, understanding evolution helps us make sense of the world while making our view of life on Earth immeasurably richer.