

# Images make climate change real

Jun. 14, 2015 at 2:01 AM

Kudos for your editorial insisting "when the lava comes, you act, you don't quibble" ("Our View: Our View: Get partisanship out of climate debate," June 10). I love your metaphor. However, few understand "lava is coming." I've been a climate change volunteer for years, reading and writing about climate change. Yet I haven't really understood what the lava is. Papers talk about climate change, seas rising and oceans warming, but with my limited imagination, I only picture weather permuting, beaches reshaping. So what?

Not even Texas flood pictures allowed my imagination to grasp your metaphorical "lava." Recently, I watched one episode of "Years of Living Dangerously," which told one climate change story with pictures, interviews of firefighters working a forest fire and scientists gathering evidence ... I saw what my imagination couldn't construct.

Current warming of only 1 degree made America's West a tinderbox. It's drier, so wildfires burn hotter, destroying the soil, which blows away. Without soil, trees won't return for tens of generations. Warmer temperatures allowed pine beetles to move north, thrive and kill more trees than all our wildfires combined. Projections warn that within about a decade, America's West will lose half its trees ... and beetles flow into Canada and Alaska.

"Years of Living Dangerously" helps us imagine "lava," imagine what "climate change" means for us, our children and grandchildren.

Only when our imaginations are ablaze will our empathy ignite, and we'll burn with rage until Congress charges polluters for the emissions that cause the "lava" to flow.

Please, be the volcano.

Rabbi Judy Weiss

Brookline

[LINK](#)