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Emeryville: Nearly 200 board 'People's Climate Train' for New York City march

By Natalie Neysa Alund
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EMERYVILLE -- About 175 people gathered Monday at the Emeryville Amtrak station to rally for action on climate change and then set out for the People's Climate March on Sunday in New York City.

"This is an epic journey we are embarking on," local organizer and Berkeley resident Valerie Love told a cheering crowd outside the station before the group embarked on a four-day train trip to New York.

Love, who sported a blue T-shirt that read "Coast to Coast for Climate Action," said the march was aimed at calling attention to changing global weather patterns that will dramatically affect the planet. The march is expected to draw close to 250,000 people, the largest climate rally to date in U.S. history, she said.



Wearing a shirt of her own design, Linda Currie, of Berkeley, prepares to depart aboard the Climate Train in Emeryville, Calif., on Monday, Sept. 15, 2014. Passengers aboard the Climate Train will travel by Amtrak train to New York City where they will join other climate change activists at the People's Climate March. (Kristopher Skinner/Bay Area News Group) (Kristopher Skinner)

The event is timed to coincide with the 2014 United Nations Climate Summit. Activists want government leaders to take action on measures that will reverse the effects of climate change being felt around the world.

"It's a big movement," said Love, 29, who also works for the Center for Biological Diversity. "We are telling

leaders we need more than talk; we need bold action to leave our children and grandchildren a safe, healthy and livable future.

The crowd held signs that read "Stop Climate Chaos" and sang songs before boarding what they named the "People's Climate Train," bound for New York.

Washington state resident Mary Hath Spokane, adorned in a Statue of Liberty costume, led them in song.

"We want change, and we want it now," Spokane said.

Another traveler, Buddhist nun Ayya Santussika, called the journey a pilgrimage.

"When we get there we will see hundreds of thousands of people on this planet standing up for every being on it and for every future generation," said Santussika, 60, of Mountain View.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is set to host the 2014 climate summit on Sept. 23. According to the U.N. website, world leaders from governments and international environmental and business industries are expected to attend.