

Global Warming- What You Can Do

“The average American generates about 15,000 pounds of carbon dioxide every year from personal transportation, home energy use and from the energy used to produce all of the products and services we consume.” www.climatecrisis.net

- **Calculate your personal carbon impact** at www.safeclimate.net/calculator/ or www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/.
- **Reduce your carbon pollution.** For dozens of personal steps you can take, small and large, see www.stopglobalwarming.org and www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction. Here is a sampling:
 - Get an energy audit of your home; identify where you can save energy.
 - Caulk and weather-strip your doorways and windows. Save 1,700 lbs. of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and \$274 per year.
 - Replace all your light bulbs this week with compact fluorescents – 3 bulbs save 300 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$60 per year. Buy products with less packaging. Recycle paper, plastic and glass. Bring your own canvass bags to shop. Buy organic and buy locally. Save another 1,000 lbs. per year.
 - Buy or lease a hybrid car or a car that gets more than 40 miles to the gallon and save an average of 16,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$3,750 per year.
 - Switch to double pane windows and save 10,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$436 per year. Replace old appliances (e.g., older refrigerators) with energy efficient ones.
 - Purchase renewable energy. Green your power: www.green-e.org.
 - Offset your carbon output when driving, flying or at home: www.terrapass.com.
 - Unplug un-used electronics. Even when electronic devices are turned off, they use energy. Save over 1,000 lbs of carbon dioxide and \$256 per year.
- **Organize your workplace, school, neighborhood and town.** Set up car shares, go solar, educate and activate. Contact www.climateprotectioncampaign.org for assistance.
- **Call, write and make in person visits to your elected officials:** local, state and federal. Demand investments in global warming solutions, incentives to reduce carbon pollution and a commitment to kicking the fossil fuel habit entirely by 2020 as Sweden has done.
- **Donate to Congregation Shaar Zahav for a “Cool Shul” campaign** to reduce our carbon output (including steps above), go solar as soon as is practical (current state rebates will cut the cost in half), and take leadership regionally & nationally to stop global warming.
- **Donate generously to climate change organizations** such as those highlighted in this handout that are dedicated to stopping global warming & researching and reducing its impacts.
- **Keep informed and stay involved. The future of our planet depends on it.**

- Sign up at www.climatecrisiscoalition.org for daily and weekly global warming news updates and news archives. Also, see the books and articles listed below.
- For state action alerts & extensive background information, including climate change impacts on California, see www.fightglobalwarming.org (Environmental Defense) and www.environmentalcalifornia.org/global-warming.
- For federal climate change policy, legislation, and innovative programs and partnerships, see Pew Center on Global Climate Change at www.pewclimate.org: see especially *Agenda for Climate Action*, February 2006; free download.
- For an excellent global view, see the UN's Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: *Living Beyond Our Means: Natural Assets and Human Well-being at* www.millenniumassessment.org
- To explore Jewish perspectives and learn more about the Reform movement's campaign to stop global warming, see www.urj.org/csa, the Religious Action Center www.rac.org/, and the Coalition on Environment and Jewish Learning www.coejl.org.
- For interfaith action on global warming, see CA Interfaith Power and Light: www.interfaithpowerandlight.org and nationally, www.theregenerationproject.org.

Recommended Books & Articles:

Bernstein, Ellen. Editor. *Ecology & the Jewish Spirit: Where Nature & the Sacred Meet*. 2000.

Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont.

Flannery, Tim. *The Weather Makers, How Man is Changing the Climate and What it Means for Life on Earth*. 2005. Atlantic Monthly Press, NY.

Gore, Al. *An Inconvenient Truth, The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*. 2006. Rodale.

Linden, Eugene. *The Winds of Change: Climate, Weather & the Destruction of Civilizations*. 2006. Simon & Schuster.

McKibben, Bill. *Voices: A Deeper Shade of Green*, National Geographic, August 2006. (free online)

Stix, Gary. *A Climate Repair Manual*. Scientific American. September, 2006. (free online) See other articles on energy conservation, coal, nuclear, biofuels & renewables in this excellent special issue, *Energy's Future: Beyond Carbon, How to Power the Economy & Still Fight Global Warming*.

Wilson, E.O. *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth*. 2006. W. W. Norton, N.Y.

Key Global Warming Facts:

- The US, with 4% of the world's population, spews ~1/4 of the planet's greenhouse gas pollution.
- Human activities have increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to the highest levels of any time in the past 800,000 years. The fastest significant increase occurred in just the past 17 years.
- The earth warmed by 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit (F) during the past century. Greenhouse gas emissions are expected to heat up the world by another 2.5 -12 degrees F or more this century.

- The ocean drives weather. The warmer ocean is already changing weather patterns, causing more unpredictable, destructive & deadly hurricanes, droughts, floods, pestilence & wildfires globally.
- It takes ~30 years for the vast surface layers of the ocean to absorb increased heat in the atmosphere. Today's ocean reflects the atmosphere of the 1970s, not any of our dramatic increases in greenhouse gas pollution since then.
- The ice sheets of Antarctica and Greenland are melting several times faster than previously thought, and Arctic ice is melting even in winter. As a result, sea level rise of up to 20 feet is projected over the next century. More than 2/3 of the world's population lives in coastal and estuarine regions.
- Global warming is projected to cause "global biocide," killing from 300,000 to millions of people annually by mid-century. Many more will become global warming refugees, making Hurricane Katrina's devastation seem minor in comparison.
- Increased carbon is causing the ocean to become more acidic, threatening to dissolve shells & coral reefs over this century. Current acidity levels will take tens of thousands of years to return to pre-industrial levels. Our actions today will still be impacting people over 500 generations from now.
- Our burning of fossil fuels is destroying the long-evolved timing between animals and other species around them, breaking down the food chain. We are causing the 6th mass extinction in the history of the earth, with 20% or more of all species projected to be lost by 2030. Biodiversity, the diversity and abundance of life, is essential to our existence- ecologically, economically & spiritually.
- Deforestation is the second major contributor to atmospheric CO₂ globally. Felled timber releases CO₂ as it burns or decays and disturbed soils produce CO₂ from burned organic matter. Forests give way largely to annual crops that store CO₂ for only a season or to cities with little vegetation at all.
- About 850 coal fired electric plants are on-line to be built in the US, China and India. By 2012 their emissions will outweigh Kyoto accord reductions by several times if new carbon capture technologies are not installed now.
- Residential and commercial building account for 70% of electricity demand in the US. Making our homes and offices more energy efficient can contribute significantly to reducing CO₂ pollution.
- Greenhouse gas emissions must be cut by 70% just to stabilize the environment at its current rate of disruption.
- Some scientists give us about 10 years (some even less) before we reach a tipping point of exponentially greater disaster that will alter life on our planet forever.
- A mix of energy conservation, innovative technologies and new policies can stabilize greenhouse gas pollution worldwide but we must act now, individually and communally, before it is too late.

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a [person] stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others...[s/he] sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of...resistance." -Robert F. Kennedy, South Africa, 1966

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 Congregation Shaar Zahav, San Francisco, September, 2006