

What You Can Do

Scientists are convinced that human actions are causing global warming. If this is so, it stands to reason that our own actions can also help reduce this threat.

Because US emissions of heat-trapping gases are so high, Americans have a special responsibility and opportunity to work to reduce the threat of global warming. You can help by taking personal action, encouraging community action, and influencing US action.

TAKE PERSONAL ACTION

You can reduce your personal contribution to global warming and set an example for others by using less gasoline, natural gas, oil, and electricity in your daily life. Your choices about energy and transportation are especially crucial.

- The next time you buy a car, choose one that is highly fuel efficient. Your choice of vehicle is probably your single most important environmental decision: for every single gallon of gasoline burned, 20 pounds of carbon dioxide go into the atmosphere.
- Instead of driving alone in your car, join a carpool, take mass transit, walk, or ride a bike -- anything that reduces the amount of gasoline you burn.
- The next time you buy an appliance, purchase a highly efficient model. You can tell by looking for the Energy Star, awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Ask your local electric or gas utility to perform an energy audit of your house or apartment. Then put the recommendations into practice.
- Develop a plan to reduce daily electricity use around your home. Ask each member of your household to take responsibility for a different electricity-saving action.

ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY ACTION

You can work within your community to promote energy efficiency and use of clean energy.

- Make sure that public buildings are models of energy efficiency and encourage the incorporation of passive-solar techniques in community construction or remodeling projects.
- Urge your local library, businesses, and church or synagogue to install bike racks.
- Promote community carpooling plans and the construction of bike lanes.
- Work to change local zoning ordinances and other regulations that involve energy use.
- Encourage your local electric utilities to promote energy efficiency and the use of clean, renewable energy sources.

INFLUENCE US ACTION

The United States needs to play a leadership role in addressing global warming, and you can help make this happen.

- Write to your local newspaper about the significance of the global warming threat and the need for US leadership.
- Monitor your newspaper's coverage of this issue and write in response to any stories or letters that dismiss global warming.
- Write or call President Bush to let him know that you expect him to be an international leader on this issue.
- Contact your congressional representative and senators to encourage them to support actions to address the root causes of global warming: the emission of heat-trapping gases.
- Ask your governors, state legislators, and public utility regulators to promote energy efficiency, nonpolluting transportation alternatives, and the development of clean, renewable sources of energy -- like solar and wind power.
- Tell government officials that you want them to push industry to protect the future health of the environment by reducing carbon emissions.