

issue brief

Working to Stop Global Warming



This CAFAmerica Issue Brief presents a synopsis of facts, research and funding opportunities for causes you care about. It isn't meant to be a comprehensive report, and for that reason, provides a list of resources and website where you can learn more.

We hope you will use this as a starting point to investigate your funding interests, and find out how you can make a global difference.

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WHAT IS GLOBAL WARMING?

Global warming, though due to both natural and human causes, generally refers to the rise in atmospheric temperatures due to increased greenhouse gases produced by humans. The resulting climate change, and accelerating rise in temperatures worldwide, isn't likely to change, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).¹ For example, 11 of the 12 warmest years on record occurred from 1995 to 2006. Scientists predict an increase in average temperature up to 10.4° F over the next 100 years — a rate of warming unprecedented in the last 10,000 years.²

Global warming is believed to cause numerous environmental problems, including rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and coastal flooding. In addition, precipitation levels have risen, and there have been more frequent and severe weather patterns, such as hurricanes in the North Atlantic and El Niño.

WHAT CAUSES GLOBAL WARMING?

There is more carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere today than in the past 650,000 years combined. Global warming gains its name from this increased level of carbon dioxide, which retains heat in the Earth's atmosphere and 'acts like a warm blanket.'³

A majority of climatologists conclude that humans are causing global warming by burning fossil fuels, like oil, coal and natural gas, and cutting down forests. Most of the fuel burning occurs in automobiles, in factories, and in electric power plants that provide energy

for houses and office buildings. Consequently, more carbon dioxide is being released into the atmosphere than ever before.

What does global warming mean for our future? And faced with accelerating climate change, what can we do?

WHAT'S BEING DONE?

There are many examples around the world of actions at all levels to reverse climate change:

Search for Alternative Energy Sources —

Alternative, or renewable, energy sources that do not emit carbon dioxide include wind, sunlight, nuclear energy, and underground steam. Currently, alternative sources of energy are more expensive to use than fossil fuels; hopefully, current research will lead to cheaper, more accessible fuels. In addition, legislation such as the Energy Policy Acts of 2002 and 2005 encourage the use and production of renewable energy sources.⁴

International Cooperation —

In 1992, over 150 countries committed to an international treaty to fight global warming, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As a result, delegates from participating nations met in Kyoto, Japan a few years later to draft the Kyoto Protocol and call for 38 industrialized nations to restrict greenhouse gas emissions beginning in 2008.

Corporations and Investors are Getting Involved —

In 2006, investment capital flowing into renewable energy reached a record-breaking \$100 billion and large energy-related corporations

¹ The IPCC is a worldwide consortium of scientists established in 1988 by the United Nations Environment Program and the World Meteorological Organization

² Globalization 101: A project of the Carnegie Endowment, www.globalization101.org

³ Stop Global Warming, www.stopglobalwarming.org.

⁴ US Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, www.eia.doe.gov

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now invest in the renewable energy sector.⁵ In 2006, Richard Branson, head of the Virgin Group, pledged \$3 billion to fight global warming. All profits from Branson's lucrative travel firms, including Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Trains, over the next decade will be invested in the development of renewable energy technologies.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

Addressing climate change is no simple task. To avert the disastrous consequences of climate change, we must dramatically reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. A number of challenges still remain:

Rising Emissions — Despite nascent efforts to reduce emissions, greenhouse gases are still rising in most of the world, particularly in developing countries such as China and India, as well as in the US. According to the International Energy Agency ⁶, China will surpass the US in 2009 as the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases linked to global warming.

Societal Change Needed — In order to stop (or at least slow) global warming, advocates say we must transform the way we power our global economy by shifting away from unrestrained fossil fuel use in pursuit of more efficient and renewable sources of energy. Such a transformation will require entire societies to engage in a concerted near and long-term effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.⁷

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING?

While the challenge of global warming may seem overwhelming, you can make a difference in a number of small and large ways. Here's how to start:

Home and Business owners...

can take advantage of US Federal and State tax rebates and incentives for using alternative energy, such as solar electric, solar heat, or wind power. Find out more by visiting the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency online at www.dsire.org.

Corporations...

can join the Business Environmental Leadership Council (BELC), founded by the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. This group engages businesses in developing efficient, effective solutions to climate change. For a list of companies involved or to find out more, visit the Pew Center's website at www.pewclimate.org.

Individual Donors and Corporate Giving Programs...

can give through CAFAmerica to a number of organizations worldwide working to protect the environment and slow global warming. They can also develop specific grant making programs and projects through our philanthropic advisory service. For more information, visit CAFAmerica's website www.cafamerica.org or email us at info@cafamerica.org.

Citizens...

can make a number of simple changes that will help slow global warming.

Carbon offsets offer a simple way to counteract individual carbon dioxide emissions, whether from air travel or household electricity use, through the reduction of carbon dioxide elsewhere. Carbon offsets can vary from the traditional method of planting a tree to purchasing an emission reduction which will be invested in renewable energy sources or conservation projects.

Although carbon offsets are often cheaper and more convenient than reducing an individual's carbon footprint, there are still easy ways to reduce fossil fuel consumption in everyday life. For a list of tips, visit the Alliance to Save Energy online at www.ase.org.

HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT WITH CAFAmerica

At the suggestion of our generous donors, CAFAmerica supports a number of grantee organizations working for the environment. Here are some examples of how these organizations make a difference—and how you too can help:

5. Pew Center for Climate Change, www.pewclimate.org/companies_leading_the_way_belc

6. International Energy Agency, www.iea.org

7. Union of Concerned Scientists, www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/solutions



Conservation Lower Zambezi, Zambia

Although species conservation garners more interest (and grants) now than a few decades ago, the issue merits still greater support. Global warming poses one of the greatest threats to the Earth's wildlife. A report released by the IPCC in May 2007 predicts that approximately 20-30 percent of plant and animal species may face an increased risk of extinction due to global warming.⁸ Since 1995, Conservation Lower Zambezi has been doing its part to protect Zambian animal and plant life within the lower Zambezi National Park.

Conservation Lower Zambezi works specifically to protect the wildlife and habitats of Zambia's Lower Zambezi region. To accomplish this goal, the organization provides Environmental Education Programs (EEP) and wildlife/habitat conservation programs for impoverished rural communities. CLZ takes their programs on the road via the Mobile Unit, a Land cruiser equipped with TV and video which has thus far reached 6,000 students. Through their efforts, CLZ hopes to educate the next generation to make better, more environmentally responsible decisions.

With grants from CAFAmerica, suggested by individual donors, CLZ was able to increase its conservation capacities and provide vehicle/boat maintenance, food, and veterinary supplies, vital to Zambia wildlife rangers. As a result, CLZ provided transport and logistical support to the government agency that protects Zambia's wilderness areas, the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA). CLZ's internal data indicates their efforts have reduced poaching activities in the past five years.⁹ CLZ receives the majority of its funds from international organizations like CAFAmerica. To find out more, visit www.conservationlowerzambezi.org.

To give to the organizations listed here, or another international charity of your choice, contact CAFAmerica today at info@cafamerica.org.

Grupo para Promover la Educación y el Desarrollo Sustentable, A.C., Mexico

A major challenge in the fight against global warming will be to persuade developing countries to decrease use of fossil fuels even as they work to expand their economies and fight poverty. Grupo para Promover la Educación y el Desarrollo Sustentable, or GRUPEDSAC, is working on both fronts: it aims to implement solutions to both poverty and environmental degradation throughout Mexico. It was founded in 1990 to help struggling farmers learn alternative methods to cope with the deteriorating Mexican countryside and loss of natural resources.

A CAFAmerica grantee since 2003, GRUPEDSAC aims to educate, train, and develop actions that contribute to sustainable societies. It focuses on promoting environmental awareness, self-sufficiency in water and energy, food security, ecological home construction, self development, increased productivity, and more.

With the help of a \$19,000 CAFAmerica grant in 2006, the organization was able to build an eco-friendly library and multi-use space at a training center in Ejutla, Oaxaca. The Tonantzia Tlalli Institute (Mother Earth Institute) is now used as a place to train subsistence farmers and other citizens on sustainable living practices, including ways to get clean water, food, energy and housing. The library was constructed using recycled agricultural waste and will use alternate energy sources by relying on solar cells for light.

The CAFAmerica grant, further enabled GRUPEDSAC to implement sustainable development programs. To find out more, visit www.grupedsac.org.

8. www.nwf.org

RESOURCES

Recent Publications

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Synthesis Report. IPCC, November 2007. The Synthesis Report forms the final part of Climate Change 2007, the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report. The IPCC, winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, has worked with scientists around the world to collect, assess and process a body of solid and up-to-date scientific literature, and synthesize it into a concise document targeted to policymakers. For more on the report, visit www.ipcc.ch or <http://195.70.10.65/>.

Green Beyond Grants: A Toolkit for Greening Foundation Operations. Environmental Funders Group and Sustainability Funders, April 2007. This toolkit provides easy ways for foundations and other organizations to “go green” in their practices. To find out more, visit www.ega.org.

Websites

Climate Group, www.theclimategroup.org

Funders Workgroup for Sustainable Production and Consumption, www.sustainabilityfunders.org

Global GreenGrants Fund, www.greengrants.org

Greenpeace International, www.greenpeace.org/international

Pew Center on Global Climate Change, www.pewclimate.org

Resources for the Future, www.rff.org

Stop Global Warming, www.stopglobalwarming.org

Union of Concerned Scientists, www.ucsusa.org/global_warming

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, www.unfccc.int/2860.php

Worldwatch Institute, www.worldwatch.org

CAFAmerica...Your World. Your Move.

CAFAmerica connects US donors with charities worldwide, helping them make a difference for people and causes they care about. We work with individuals, families, corporations and foundations. We also enable foreign charities to fundraise easily in the US.

With a network of offices around the globe, we are experts in global giving and identifying local needs. CAFAmerica is an independent member of the CAF International Network, which spans six continents and manages more than \$4 billion in charitable funds.

CAFAmerica makes global giving effective and secure for everyone.

We're changing the culture of global giving, by creating a world where international giving is not uncommon, but done every day.

Join us in our commitment to make lasting change. Call us today for a free brochure, *Your Passport to Global Giving*, or visit our new website at www.cafamerica.org.