

CITIZENS CALL TO ACTION TO STOP GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

PREAMBLE

Humanity is now faced with an unprecedented challenge. Global climate change is a problem of significant magnitude that requires urgent action. Extreme weather, more intense storms, and melting glaciers are just some of the early warning signals. People, species, and habitats are already threatened by changes in the climate resulting from greenhouse gas emissions from human activities.

Solutions to climate change must be dictated by science and by the needs of people and communities – not by politics. It is unconscionable for Washington to fiddle while Rome burns, Indonesia floods, and the Arctic melts. It is time for a national goal to limit climate change to 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Limiting warming to 3.6 F is considered vital to preventing the worst effects of climate change as outlined by recent IPCC reports.

The challenges posed of global climate change can be solved through determined action and innovative thinking. We Americans are known and respected for our entrepreneurial spirit and our ability to mobilize our vast resources and innovative technologies to solve problems and create opportunities in the face of adversity. This same spirit can be mobilized again to safeguard our future.

We need to *phase out* fuels, technologies, and practices that contribute to climate change and *phase in* fuels, technologies and practices that move us towards a solution. Available technologies can be utilized to put us on an immediate path to a future of sustainable development and economic growth. We can make the American economy stronger by investing in developing renewable energy technology and greater energy efficiency, two key strategies to effectively address climate change. By supporting economic conversion away from unsustainable technologies to clean and renewable energy, the U.S. will create jobs and become a world-leading incubator of critical technologies and resources. Such an economic transformation is particularly important in those states that have historically been dependent on coal.

The United States can and must take strong action and demonstrate global leadership. In doing so, we will enhance our economic and environmental security, including reducing the need for wars to ensure access to resources such as oil. Equally important, U.S. leadership on global warming will help restore America's reputation and moral authority in the world.

CALL TO ACTION

We call on the U.S. government to take decisive action to stop global warming and climate change. Our government should act immediately using all the tools at our nation's disposal

THE UNITED STATES SHOULD SET A TARGET OF 80% REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BELOW 1990 LEVELS BY 2050 CONSISTENT WITH WHAT SCIENTISTS SUGGEST AS URGENTLY NEEDED TO AVOID DANGEROUS CLIMATE CHANGE.

THE PATH TOWARD A NEW ENERGY FUTURE:

TO GET TO THIS GOAL THE FOLLOWING STRATEGY OF METHODICALLY INTRODUCING RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES WHILE PHASING OUT OUR RELIANCE ON OLDER AND DANGEROUS FOSSIL FUELS CAN HELP SOLVE GLOBAL WARMING WHILE ENSURING QUALITY OF LIFE AND A GROWING ECONOMY.

We must:

- PHASE OUT our reliance on coal, and

PHASE IN increased use of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and distributed generation.

- PHASE OUT our reliance on oil, and
PHASE IN increased fuel efficiency standards, use of renewable fuels, and alternative vehicle technologies.
- PHASE OUT subsidies and incentives for greenhouse gas polluters, and
PHASE IN taxes on greenhouse gas polluters to pay for adaptation and mitigation. Use pollution tax to subsidize research and development for renewable and clean energy technologies.
- PHASE OUT investments in fossil fuel and coal, and
PHASE IN investments in renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency

KEY PRINCIPLES

In navigating the challenging path ahead to a safer future that avoids the direst and irreversible consequences of global climate change, the following principles must serve as our guide:

- Use of resources must not exceed the capacity of the earth to regenerate those resources.
- We should minimize the use of unsustainable energy sources that generate dangerous byproducts, whether that means coal's greenhouse gas emissions or nuclear energy's radioactive waste. And we must avoid investing in energy sources that lock us into a high-carbon future, such as oil shale, tar sands, and coal-to-liquid fuel.
- Directing private and government resources to develop the clean technologies will create jobs and make the U.S. a leader in the new energy sector.
- Maximize the use of locally available renewable fuels and energy.
- Move energy production closer to the consumer and accommodate renewable resources.
- The excellent cannot become the enemy of the good. There are times that trade-offs will arise and hard choices will have to be made. Providing safe, clean, and efficient energy is of utmost importance.

Delay is not an option. We have the technologies available now to take us more rapidly down the path toward a carbon-free future. Existing technologies can buy us the time to invent and discover even more effective means to provide the energy needs of the next industrial revolution.

Specifically, the federal government must do the following:

Immediate First Steps

1. Phase Out Reliance on Coal

- Immediately and fully enforce the laws regulating the extraction of coal. Coal miners and coalfield communities suffer needlessly from the persistent and systematic non-enforcement of safety and environmental laws. 90 percent of deaths in coal mines are a direct result of violations of mine safety laws, while surface mining law is often ignored by enforcement agencies and eroded by political administrations. The non-enforcement of laws regulating the extraction of coal is an often unseen and unjust subsidy to the coal industry, holding the market price of coal lower than the true cost of mining that coal.
- Institute a five-year moratorium on new coal plants. As evidenced by mountain-top removal and dangerous emissions, there is no such thing as "clean coal". The government must prevent the construction of long-lived coal-fired power plants that are

mismatched with an energy future that is good for the economy, good for the environment, good for our national security, and safe for communities. The government must put a halt to construction of new coal-fired facilities and give energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies increased support for more accelerated growth.

- Cut new buildings' electricity use by 50 percent by 2010. Using electricity more efficiently is the most obvious substitute for coal. The government must create stronger mandates or incentives so that all new construction and renovation result in energy efficient homes and businesses by 2010. The government could accomplish this either by instituting a national efficiency building code for new construction and renovation or by providing incentives to states and localities to update their building codes.
- Create a national requirement for electric utilities to obtain 20 percent of their power from renewable sources by 2015 and 33 percent by 2020. Renewable, safe, and clean energy like solar and wind power should be greatly expanded. This standard matches at the national level some of the strongest standards currently in place in the states.
- Create a national "seed" market for renewable energy. A strong federal commitment to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency would boost U.S. industrial competitiveness in climate change mitigation. It would also create a market large enough to encourage private sector research and development and investment necessary to bring renewable technologies to scale.
- Investments in renewable technology should be targeted to those states that have historically depended on coal, providing good jobs and a clean environment for the people in those states. The economic benefits of stimulating the renewable energy industry would be spread throughout the country because all states have renewable energy resources that can be developed. For example, it is estimated that 46 out of 50 states have some form of developable wind resources. In those states that historically have depended on coal, investments should be targeted to support an economic conversion to clean, renewable energy technologies that provide good jobs and a clean environment for the people in those states.
- Create a federal level Green Corps, similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps, to train and employ a new generation of energy specialists that can work in the public sector to ensure that low income American's homes can be energy efficient.

2. Phase Out Reliance on Oil

- Increase new-passenger-vehicle fuel economy to 40 mpg by 2010 and to 55 mpg by 2020. There are already 113 vehicles that get at least 40 mpg (and 38 that get at least 50 mpg) that are available overseas, while there are only two such vehicles available in the United States.

3. Phase Out Misaligned Incentives and Technologies

- Put a price on carbon by instituting a carbon tax (or gasoline tax) or by implementing a cap on greenhouse gas emissions for power plants and other sources.¹ Designate at least half of the proceeds for a national fund for research, development, and deployment of sustainable energy sources and new transportation technologies, with the rest going to promote adaptation, to compensate early victims, and to lessen the impacts of the tax on low-income citizens.

¹ See Robert H. Socolow and Stephen W. Pacala, "A Plan for Keeping Carbon in Check," *Scientific American*, September 2006, http://www.ph.hunter.cuny.edu/faculty/greenbaum/courses/HONS30144/article_Plan_for_carbon.pdf.

- Double climate change adaptation funding by 2010 to help the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other agencies prepare for climate-related disasters and refugees, as well as to create a national adaptation strategy.
- Retire all existing nuclear power plants. Nuclear power presents numerous threats to people and the environment from its operations, and it is not a renewable resource (uranium is finite); so while nuclear power does not produce carbon emissions, it is not part of the solution.

4. Other Immediate Steps Needed

- Re-engage with the international community. The United States cannot solve climate change on its own, and the rest of the world cannot solve climate change without the United States.
- Halt tropical deforestation and promote other carbon sinks. Along with efforts to reduce the amount of emissions we create, the government must also promote policies to enhance the ability of the earth to absorb more carbon from the atmosphere.

Key Mid-Century Results

By mid-century, our country must have pushed well beyond these immediate steps to achieve the following results:

- Cut energy use in half by 2050. America must eliminate at least half of the expected growth in emissions from energy use through efficiency.
- Produce at least 50% of our energy from clean renewable sources by 2030 and 80% by 2050. Renewable energy technologies have the potential to provide large reductions in carbon emissions below current levels.
- Quadruple investment in research, development, and deployment of clean new technologies. The sooner a start is made, the quicker a new generation of more efficient and low- or zero-carbon energy systems can be put in place.

REMEMBER:

- It is not too late!
- It can be done!
- It will not happen without the American people demanding action of governments and businesses – and taking personal action wherever possible!