

## Our Carbon Footprint

### Why we care

In going about our lives—driving, flying, heating our homes, purchasing goods, and eating—each of us contributes to the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change. Each household emits greenhouse gases equivalent to 23,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year. These include CO<sub>2</sub> from burning fossil fuels; methane from landfills, natural gas systems, and cattle; and nitrous oxide from fertilizers.

### Simple, positive change

- Carbon calculators show how different behaviors contribute to your household emissions. Visit <http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/> and pledge to reduce your footprint.
- In addition, tax yourself for your emissions by purchasing carbon offsets or renewable energy credits.
  - A *carbon offset* funds projects that reduce carbon emissions elsewhere. Offset projects include installing high-efficiency equipment, capturing methane, or planting trees. However, while trees do absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, you may be waiting many years for the reduction to take place. Purchase offsets from an entity such as Native Energy or TerraPass or through a utility program like NW Natural's Smart Energy program.
  - A *renewable energy credit*, or *green tag*, doesn't actually reduce emissions, but it provides an extra incentive to a developer of a renewable energy source, such as wind, solar, or biomass. Bonneville Environmental Foundation (503-248-1905) is a local source of green tags that are certified by a third party. PGE customers can choose to contribute to wind, geothermal, and biomass projects around the west, or purchase Oregon wind power only. Pacific Power customers may enroll in Blue Sky, which purchases green tags on their behalf.

**Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at [jeanne@earthleaders.org](mailto:jeanne@earthleaders.org).**