

# TIPS FOR REDUCING ONE'S CARBON FOOTPRINT

## HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY

What you can do now:

- Replace all lighting with LED lights.
- Use seasonally self-adjusting timers on porch lights and other outdoor lighting.
- Turn off lights, appliances, and electronics when not in use.
- Unplug electronics once they finish charging.
- Avoid or unplug appliances with small lights that remain lit when appliance is not in use.
- Use a clothesline instead of a clothes dryer, or use the dryer for a brief time and then hang dry.
- Buy a programmable thermostat.
- Keep house temperature low and wear warmer clothing.
- Turn heat down at night and when away from home.
- Close blinds, shades, or curtains at night.
- Use insulated window coverings such as warm window shades.
- Turn the thermostat on your water heater down to 120 degrees.
- Use a Kill-A-Watt meter to be aware of energy consumption of appliances and electronics.

What you can do in the longer term:

- Use electricity instead of fossil fuels especially in Seattle.
- Use energy efficient appliances.
- Convert to a heat pump or geothermal heat pump.
- Have a home energy audit and seal to reduce air leakage in your home.
- Insulate your walls and attic.
- Weatherstrip doors and windows.
- Change windows to triple-pane glass.
- Install solar panels and a solar hot water system.
- Consider an on-demand or point-of-use hot water system.
- Move to a smaller home or rent out extra living space.

What you can do to influence public policy:

- Support legislation to ban new fossil fuel infrastructure and phase out existing infrastructure in favor of renewable energy sources.
- Divest from financial institutions that finance fossil fuel industries.
- Support legislation that encourages home installation of solar panels, solar hot water, and heat pumps.
- Through Cascadia Climate Action you can find out about local climate-related events and organizations.

## WATER CONSERVATION

What you can do now:

- Put flow restrictors on showerheads and faucets.
- Don't let water run continuously when rinsing dishes.
- Don't let water run continuously when washing hands, brushing teeth, or showering.
- Use a shower timer or other timing device which you place outside the tub.
- Use the shower to lather up, then turn off the shower while washing, then turn on to rinse.
- Capture water when running water to get it hot. Use a cutaway milk bottle with handle or run water into watering cans for plants.
- Use cold water to wash clothing and wash only full loads.
- Fill the dishwasher completely before using it.
- Don't flush the toilet after each use.
- Stop watering the lawn.

What you can do in the longer term:

- Install low-flush toilets.

- Convert your lawn to a waterwise, organic, chemical-free food garden.
- Install rain barrels and cisterns to catch rainwater for watering gardens.
- Reduce pavement and install pervious pavement.

What you can do to influence public policy:

- Support legislation encouraging sustainable use of water resources.

## **GARBAGE REDUCTION**

What you can do now:

- When making purchases, think how they will be disposed of when worn out.
- Recycle as much as possible – paper, glass, plastic.
- Put food waste in a worm bin or city compost/yard waste.
- Minimize food waste by menu planning before shopping for food and by using leftovers.
- Take worn clothing and shoes to a Threadcycle collection point.
- Repair clothing when possible.
- Take used electronics to electronic recycling events or electronic recycling centers.
- Creatively re-purpose items rather than throwing them away.
- Avoid printing hardcopy by using and storing documents in electronic form.
- Re-use paper printed on one side, especially for writing and printing drafts.
- Borrow books and audiobooks from the library rather than buying them.
- Use e-books and e-audiobooks as an alternative to purchasing hardcopy.
- Subscribe to newspapers and magazines in electronic form.
- Receive bank statements in electronic form.
- Buy used clothing, books, and other items rather than new items.
- Buy napkins, toilet paper, etc. made of recycled paper.
- Use cloth handkerchiefs, napkins, etc. instead of paper products.
- Avoid excessive packaging.
- Re-use or avoid using plastic bags.
- Purchase in bulk, using your own containers such as repurposed glass jars.
- Use reusable cloth bags when shopping, including net bags for produce and bulk items.
- Carry a washable coffee mug with you instead of using disposable cups.
- Carry a metal water bottle instead of buying bottled water in throwaway plastic containers.
- Bring your own plates, cups, and utensils instead of using disposable items at events.
- Eliminate disposable products from your kitchen and the rest of your home.

What you can do in the longer term:

- Learn to live with less, especially considering that we tend to buy things we don't use.
- Join a tool library to avoid purchasing seldom-used items.

What you can do to influence public policy:

- Support legislation requiring recycling and composting.
- Support legislation banning plastic bags and non-recyclable containers and packaging.

## **TRANSPORTATION ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

What you can do now:

- Walk or ride a bicycle.
- Combine trips.
- Plan ahead to do errands only on certain days.
- Organize carpools when possible.
- Support and use ridesharing software.
- Take public transportation when possible.
- Use software such as Skype or Zoom to avoid travel to meetings.
- Avoid air travel. Prefer surface transportation.
- Do not run your car engine unnecessarily.
- Drive at 55 mph maximum speed.

Longer term:

- Buy an electric car (best) or a hybrid electric car (next best).
- Buy a used energy-efficient car.
- Buy a small car.
- Make your car last many years.
- Keep up your car maintenance.
- Sell one or both of your cars.

What you can do to influence public policy:

- Support legislation to encourage purchase of electric cars and building of charging stations.
- Support legislation to require greater fuel efficiency of vehicles.
- Support legislation to ban new fossil fuel infrastructure and phase out existing infrastructure in favor of renewable energy sources.
- Divest from financial institutions that finance fossil fuel industries.

## **SUSTAINABLE FOOD PURCHASING AND CONSUMPTION**

What you can do now:

- Buy and eat locally produced food when possible.
- Buy and eat food that is in season when possible.
- Reduce or avoid meat consumption.
- Eat more produce.
- Eat more organic food.
- Plan menus ahead to avoid food waste.
- Compost food waste (at home or in city compost).

What you can do long term:

- Adopt a vegetarian (no eating of animals) or vegan (no animal products) lifestyle.
- Start a vegetable garden to raise food for yourself and your family.
- Join a community garden or rent a p-patch.

What you can do to influence public policy:

- Support legislation for labeling food by state and country of origin.
- Support legislation for more transparency in labeling food ingredients and production information such as organic standards and GMO status.

## **SUSTAINABLE SHOPPING**

What you can do now:

- Think about the lifecycle of an item before deciding to buy it – will you really make good use of it? How will you dispose of it?
- Prefer locally produced goods as much as possible.
- Avoid printed material; prefer in electronic form.
- Buy used items instead of new.
- Borrow or rent items that you do not plan to use often.
- Make things last.

What you can do long-term:

- Learn to repair items such as torn clothing.
- Learn to live with less, especially considering that we tend to buy things we don't use.
- Join a tool library to avoid purchasing seldom-used items.

What you can do to influence public policy:

- Support legislation to require reusable bags, ban plastic bags, and reduce throwaway packaging.