



Energize Your Community About Energy

In this document you will find information about climate and energy advocacy opportunities, a toolkit of suggested activities and other resources to help you strengthen the connection between programming and advocacy, and enhance and coordinate your efforts with other communities across the country.¹

Background

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most serious challenges facing the world today. Fortunately, we already have the technology and the knowledge to help protect the health and economic well-being of current and future generations.

Our tradition teaches that Adam and Eve were asked to "till and to tend" the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:15). We are told that God literally took Adam and Eve by the hand, declaring, "Look at my works! See how beautiful they are—how excellent! For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it after you." (*Midrash Kohelet Rabbah*, 1 on Ecclesiastes 7:13) Despite this admonition, man-made carbon emissions threaten to irreparably alter the Earth. As partners in God's creation, it is our obligation to address this impact by practicing "*Tikkun Olam*," literally, repairing the world.

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ("IPCC") concluded that climate change is "unequivocal" and that human beings are more than likely causing it.² Abundant data supports this conclusion. Carbon dioxide concentrations are higher than they have been in more than half-a-million years, with carbon dioxide levels increasing more than 30 percent since the start of the Industrial Revolution. Twelve of the last thirteen years are among the warmest since temperature has been recorded. Global temperature has increased by more than 1 degree Fahrenheit during the same period.

Effects of these changes are already visible. Across the globe, we are witnessing melting glaciers, shifting ranges of plants and animals, extended droughts, and the earlier onset of spring. With continued warming, we can expect more extreme heat and drought, rising sea levels, and higher-intensity tropical storms. These trends threaten our coastal property and resources, the livability of our cities in summer, and the productivity of our farms, forests and fisheries.

We can't avoid all the consequences of global warming, but committing ourselves to action today can help us fulfill our mandate to protect creation.

¹ This document can be found at: www.coejl.org/Energy_Toolkit.pdf

² The "IPCC" is a scientific body created by the United Nations with the explicit task of evaluating the risk of climate change caused by human activity. Its most recent assessment ("The Fourth Assessment Report") reflects the work of experts from more than 130 countries and includes input from more than 450 lead authors, 800 contributing authors, and an additional 2,500 experts.



Energy Security

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the United States imported nearly 170 million barrels of crude oil from OPEC nations in April 2008. With imported crude costs at record highs, American oil dependence facilitated an \$18 billion transfer of wealth from American consumers to a cartel that includes some of the most dangerous regimes in the world. With prices expected to remain high throughout 2008, the United States will send nearly \$230 billion into OPEC nations' national coffers this year. These petrodollars will be allocated with minimal transparency by a handful of governments that are hostile to both the United States and Israel, emboldening our enemies and preventing the United States from acting independently.

At the same time, our reliance on oil contributes to climate change, as the burning of fossil fuels is a major source of domestic greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change promises to aggravate existing international tensions. In its report, "[National Security and the Threat of Climate Change](#)," a prestigious board of retired military officers explained that "Climate change acts as a threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions in the world. Projected climate change will seriously exacerbate already marginal living standards in many Asian, African, and Middle Eastern nations, causing widespread political instability and the likelihood of failed states." Climate change threatens to spark unprecedented human migrations, increased border tensions, conflicts over essential resources, and greater international demand for rescue and evacuation efforts.

By seeking alternatives to fossil fuels, the United States can simultaneously assert our independence from hostile regimes while addressing climate change.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email [Liore Milgrom-Elcott](mailto:Liore.Milgrom-Elcott) to **join the COEJL listserv** and receive a monthly e-bulletin with information about COEJL's activities and timely legislative updates. Or, visit us online at: www.coejl.org.

The **JCPA Energy and Environment committee** holds monthly calls on related topics and provides a venue for members to learn from one another's experiences in this area. JCRC directors, national member agencies and JCPA Board members can email [Jennifer Kefer](mailto:Jennifer.Kefer) to join this committee.

COEJL staff also write **weekly blogs on climate and energy legislation**. Click [here](#) to view "To Till and To Tend: A Blog Where Jewish Tradition, Environmental Ethics and Policy Unite." Please email Jennifer if you'd like to be added to our blog distribution list. We have also created a Facebook Group to alert members of new posts. Click [here](#) to join and receive a weekly email with links.

JCPA has [extensive policy](#) addressing climate change and the related issue of energy security, including a resolution adopted at the Plenum in February 2008 highlighting the connection between climate and poverty. In light of this policy, we hope that your community will continue to mobilize around this important issue. We are happy to discuss opportunities for engagement.

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Climate Change Legislation:

U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Henry A. Waxman (D-CA), Chairman Ed Markey (D-MA) and Rep. Jay Inslee (D-WA) have created a vehicle for Congress to show its support for US climate leadership by introducing "Principles for Global Warming Legislation." The principles highlight four central features of effective legislation:

1. Reduce emissions to avoid dangerous global warming;
2. Transition America to a clean energy economy;
3. Recognize and minimize any economic impacts from global warming legislation; and
4. Aid communities and ecosystems vulnerable to harm from global warming

The Jewish community supports these principles and believes they provide a sound foundation for federal climate change legislation.

In addition to the Climate Principles, there are several efforts underway in the House to introduce national legislation to restrict greenhouse gas emissions. Representative Markey has introduced the Investing in Climate Action and Protection Act (iCAP, HR 6186) and Representative Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) has introduced the Climate MATTERS Act (HR 6316, Climate Market Auction Trust and Trade Emissions Reduction System) to institute a strong cap-and-trade system designed to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. While it is unclear whether either of these initiatives will be considered by the full House, it is nonetheless important for your Congressmen to know that their constituents support aggressive US climate change legislation.

Click [here](#) to view a copy of the "Dear Colleague" letter announcing principles for global warming legislation. Click [here](#) for a list of current signatories.

ACTION: If your Member of Congress has already signed the Dear Colleague letter, **thank your Representative** for his or her leadership. If not, **encourage your Member to join the dozens of Representatives** who have already shown their support. Further **ask your Representative to support comprehensive and aggressive climate change legislation**, such as the Investing in Climate Action and Protection Act (iCAP) introduced by Representative Markey this summer. You can reach your Representative by calling the switchboard at (202) 224-3121. A switchboard operator will connect you directly with the appropriate office.

U.S. Senate

The United States Senate has finally begun to make strides toward addressing the climate crisis. On December 5, 2007, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed America's Climate Security Act ([S 3036](#)) out of Committee. The Bill, introduced by Senators Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and John Warner (R-VA) took important first steps toward reducing our nation's greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, the bill did not secure the 60 votes needed to

proceed to debate. Nonetheless, the June climate vote represented a historic moment for our nation.

Forty-eight Senators voted in favor of consideration of the bill and relevant amendments – including many who had opposed global warming bills in the past. [Click [here](#) to find out how your senator voted] Six additional senators who were not able to participate in the vote also indicated that they would have voted in favor of debate.³ Combined, the majority of the U.S. Senate supports moving forward on aggressive federal climate legislation. Supporters included 10 Senators who had not supported cap and trade legislation in prior votes.⁴ Even among the bill's opponents, there was nearly unanimous acknowledgement of what scientists have long known – global warming is real and people in the United States and around the world are already feeling the consequences, from droughts, to more extreme weather, to sea level rise. The tremendous momentum coming out of this vote sets the stage for a new president and Congress to enact strong legislation that will more effectively build a clean energy economy and prevent the worst consequences of global warming.

ACTION: If your Senators voted for the Climate Security Act, **thank them for their support.** Regardless of their prior vote, **ask them to support comparable legislation in the future.** In particular, ask your Senators to support legislation that places a firm cap on US emissions, preferably reducing emissions by 20-25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, in accordance with the recommendations of the scientific community. Click [here](#) for additional talking points and to learn more about America's Climate Security Act.⁵

US Israel Energy Cooperation Act:

On December 19, 2007, the President signed The Energy Independence and Security Act (H.R. 6) into law. Of particular interest to the Jewish community, the Act included a provision ("The United States-Israel Energy Cooperation Act", "USIECA") that would encourage cooperation between the United States and Israel on research, development, and commercialization of alternative energy, improved energy efficiency, and renewable energy sources. This provision would establish a grant program to fund joint ventures between United States and Israeli businesses and academic persons and to establish the International Energy Advisory Board.

This initiative offers great benefits to both the United States and Israel. It would help address the problems of global climate change while advancing the national security and economic interests of both the United States and Israel. This legislation will build on the long history of American/Israeli innovation and cooperation by funding the joint research and development of

³ The following senators submitted statements indicating support for substantive debate: Biden (D-DE), Clinton (D-NY), Coleman (R-MN), Kennedy (D-MA), McCain (R-AZ), and Obama (D-IL).

⁴ Senators who voted "yes" on cloture, but had opposed votes in 2003 and 2005 include Baucus (D-MT), Dole (R-NC), Levin (D-MI), Lincoln (D-AR), Ben Nelson (D-NE), Martinez (R-FL), Pryor (D-AR), Smith (R-OR), Sununu (R-NH), Warner (R-VA).

⁵ While the Senate is no longer considering the Climate Security Act, subsequent legislation will likely share many of the bill's essential features.



new and environmentally-friendly energy technologies, which will help move both nations toward their goal of energy independence.

The Jewish community has worked to gain support for the United States-Israel Energy Cooperation Act and its inclusion in the Energy Bill is a tremendous accomplishment. To realize the possible benefits from the innovative partnerships created by this bill, it must be properly funded. Accordingly, we are seeking a \$15 million funding level in the forthcoming FY 2009 Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

ACTION: Contact your Members of Congress (in both the House and Senate) **and ask them to support full appropriations** (\$15 million in the FY 2009 Energy and Water Appropriations bill) for the US Israel Energy Cooperation Act. You can reach your Member through the switchboard at (202) 224-3121. A switchboard operator will connect you directly with the appropriate offices. [Click [here](#) for additional talking points.]

Clean Car Legislation:

On December 19, 2007, the US Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency denied California's petition to limit greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks. California had sought to establish stronger emissions standards for cars and trucks sold in the state. The Clean Air Act explicitly allows California to adopt its own standards. And the federal government has granted similar requests fifty times since 1968. The last time it denied a request was in 1975. California has since sued EPA and seventeen states (representing more than one-half of the U.S. population) have joined as plaintiffs. Meanwhile, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Congressman Peter Welch (D-VT) have introduced legislation in both chambers of Congress to overturn EPA's decision. This legislation has passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and been placed on the Senate legislative calendar. [For more on EPA's waiver denial, visit the [COEJL blog](#)]⁶

Click [here](#) to find out if your Senator is a cosponsor of S 2555, the Senate Bill.

Click [here](#) to find out if your Congressman is a cosponsor of HR 5560, the House Bill.

ACTION: **Thank your Members of Congress** if they are a cosponsor of either bill. Otherwise, **urge them to join** Senator Boxer and Congressman Welch's efforts to protect our nation's air quality. You can reach your Member of Congress through the switchboard at (202) 224-3121. A switchboard operator will connect you directly with the appropriate offices.

CLIMATE AND ENERGY PROGRAMMING

Participate in the JCPA/COEJL Earth Aid Kit Campaign. JCPA and COEJL have partnered with Earth Aid Enterprises to offer [Earth Aid Kits](#) to the Jewish community. Earth Aid Kits provide a collection of premium energy-efficiency products carefully selected to improve quality

⁶ Because this issue is of such great concern to the Jewish community, COEJL is also working with several of our member agencies to prepare a friend of the court brief challenging the EPA decision in federal court.



of life while reducing energy consumption, decreasing electric bills and carbon footprints. These kits can be used as a way to promote education about energy issues, fundraiser or community-service project. The possibilities are endless: Synagogues may choose to sell Earth Aid kits (or gift certificates for a custom-made kit) at Chanukah boutiques or as an ongoing fundraiser for congregants to purchase as wedding presents and housewarming gifts for friends and family. Federations or synagogues can purchase a "dorm kit" as a confirmation present for graduating students. Because these kits simultaneously reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help save residents money on their electric bills, they also provide an excellent *tikkun olam* opportunity for your community. For instance, JCRCs, synagogues and other community institutions can organize fundraisers to purchase Earth Aid Kits to install in low-income housing and assisted-living facilities, including those facilities run by the federations. This is especially meaningful because of the faith community's particular concern about the nexus between climate change and poverty. Click [here](#) to read the Religious Agenda for Poverty and Global Climate Change. Click [here](#) for information to launch a campaign and [here](#) for a sample city. Click [here](#) for more background on the disproportionate impact that climate change will impose on the poor.

Host a talk on Energy Independence and Conservation: Israel Advocacy through Energy Policy. Our dependence on oil from hostile nations threatens our commitment to Israel's safety and security. We must advocate for energy policy that encourages the development of renewable energy sources and conservation technology to break our dependence on foreign oil. Bring in speakers who can establish a connection between energy policy, personal/ communal behavior and Israel advocacy. This program can be co-sponsored by foreign policy and environmental organizations. Click [here](#) for additional background on the national security implications of climate change. Click [here](#) for background and talking points about the US Israel Energy Cooperation Act to help fund bilateral research on alternative energy between the United States and Israel.

Save Green By Going Green: Arrange a Home/Business Energy-Saving Session. Whether motivated by hopes of saving money or reducing carbon emissions, individuals and institutions nationwide are searching for ways to minimize their energy consumption - but few know how. Fortunately, many organizations are happy to provide guidance on ways to improve home energy performance. EPA has partnered with contractors in 21 states who can provide step-by-step guidance on ways to improve energy efficiency. Organize a community-wide seminar providing background about energy audits, energy-efficient products and behavioral changes. Help participants understand how simple changes can lead to significant reductions in energy consumption. Click [here](#) for a list of Home Performance with Energy Star partner locations, then click on "Find a Contractor" to locate potential speakers in your community. If your community is not affiliated with the EPA Home Performance with Energy Star program, click [here](#) to identify a contractor from the Building Performance Institute. Use this educational program as a platform to launch an [Earth Aid Kit](#) campaign in your community. Visit the [COEJL website](#) for additional resources on greening your building.

Stamp Out Climate Change: Collect Signatures for a Community Letter. Sending a strong letter to your members of Congress helps raise awareness and lets our leaders know that climate change is a priority for your community. Such a letter can be sent on behalf of Jewish leaders,



community organizations, or an interfaith coalition. Simply securing signatures for such a letter provides a valuable educational opportunity and helps build relationships. Click [here](#) for a sample letter urging support for federal climate change legislation.

Give Incentives To Drive Better Behavior. Urge your JCRC, synagogues and other community institutions to adopt the American Jewish Committee (AJC) compensation bonus program encouraging full-time employees to purchase or lease fuel-efficient vehicles. This program can be funded through a modest grant or targeted gift. AJC, a leading voice on energy issues in the Jewish community for more than 30 years, was the first nonprofit to create this kind of program, with remarkable success. Click [here](#) for a sample contract.

Host an Environmental Candidates' Forum. Organize a candidates' forum in your community to learn more about how candidates in your state or district feel about climate and energy issues. 501(c)(3) organizations may take a stance on important issues facing their community, as long as they do not intervene on behalf of or in opposition to candidates for public office. Non-profits are also free to hold a candidates' forum to ensure that their elected officials (and soon-to-be elected officials) care about these issues, too. Forums should cover a range of issues. To avoid favoring one candidate over the other, be sure to invite all legally qualified candidates in the race. Also, provide the candidates with opportunities to address a similar audience, for a similar length of time, and in the same general time period relative to the election. During these events, the organization should also state that it neither supports nor opposes any candidate. The [Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism](#) (in collaboration with the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, among others) and [The Interfaith Alliance](#) have prepared helpful guides on how religious leaders, congregations and religious institutions may appropriately participate in the electoral process. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for sample questions a non-profit organization may ask at a forum focusing on climate and energy issues.

Celebrate Energy Savings: Create a Guide to "Eco-Simchas" in Your Community. The Jewish life cycle is marked by ritual, ceremony and celebration – from the *brit milah* and naming ceremonies, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, to weddings and death. Unfortunately, our life-affirming celebrations often cast a shadow on the Earth – usually of big garbage bags full of plastic cups and spoons, paper plates, fancy invitations, and deflated balloons. Ironically, we have become accustomed to celebrating our own life cycles in ways that are in discord with the life cycles of the Earth. You can break this cycle by working with your community to produce an eco-*simcha* guide that is tailored to local vendors and resources. Download a copy of "[Caring for the Cycle of Life](#)" for inspiration. Then customize this resource by identifying florists who provide native centerpieces; caterers who provide local, organic food; and others who can print invitations on recycled paper. Work with the denominational bodies in your community to help distribute this resource and provide a community workshop for parents of Bar and Bat Mitzvah candidates or others who will be celebrating life-cycle events. Although this project is somewhat time intensive, it is the perfect activity for a group of engaged lay leaders in a newly formed Environment Committee at your JCRC, synagogues or other community institution. Click [here](#) for a list of green event planning resources. Click [here](#) to access "Green Mitzvot," and [here](#) to read the interactive Green Bride Guide for additional ideas, quick tips, and to locate vendors. Click [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) for additional green event planning tips by other organizations.