

Pledge To Treasure Our Planet

To get copies of this pledge or to read more, go to www.treasureourplanet.org

Check off these commitments

- 1 Move the thermostat down 2°-6° in the winter and up 2°-6° in the summer.** Install a programmable thermostat so you can preset your heat or AC to turn down or off when not needed. Make sure your heat and AC filters are clean and replaced as recommended. Adjust your clothing to the weather!
- 2 Use a window fan instead of AC during summer nights and evenings.** To cool your home further without AC, close up your house and lower blinds in the morning to keep out the heat. Ceiling and attic/whole-house fans, which can be installed at any time, will also cool your house and use far less energy than AC.
- 3 Turn down the water heater to 120°.** Hot water represents 20% of all household energy use. Turn down the heater instead of having to heat water to an uncomfortable temperature only to mix it with cold water. When you vacation, make sure to turn down your water heater to "vacation" or "sleep" mode.
- 4 Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs.** Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) consume a quarter of the energy of incandescent bulbs and last fifteen times longer. Rethink your interior and exterior lighting habits -do you really need to light the night sky? Install motion sensors for all exterior lights. Turn off the lights when you leave the room. Many CFLs cannot be used with dimmable fixtures, but the technology is changing rapidly. *CFLs must be disposed of at town hazardous waste days as they contain mercury.* For more info, go to www.efi.org.
- 5 Use cold water for laundry.** Heating water accounts for 90% of the energy used by a washing machine. Cold water cleans just as effectively and prolongs the life of clothing. Consider drying clothes on a laundry line or clothes rack. Replace inefficient older w/d units with energy and water efficient front-loading models. Go to www.energystar.com.
- 6 Use energy efficient appliances.** Look for energystar certified appliances and consider replacing old appliances. That old refrigerator in your basement could be using more energy than all your other appliances combined. Replacing an old fridge with a new energystar one could save you \$25/month on your electrical bill.
- 7 Run the dishwasher on the energy saving setting.** Air dry your dishes and run your dishwasher on the energy saving setting only when filled. Avoid excessive rinsing of your dishes and use hot water judiciously to save energy.
- 8 Pull the plug.** Connect home entertainment systems, computers, and appliances to power strips and turn off the strips when appliances are not in use. Many devices – anything with a perpetually illuminated display – use almost as much energy even when they are turned "off"; hence the popular name "energy vampires".
- 9 Travel efficiently.** Personal transportation accounts for 35% of all energy use. Use public transportation, organize carpools, and consolidate your trips and errands. If you are buying a new car, buy a fuel-efficient car. Keep tires inflated, tune your engine frequently, remove your roof rack when not in use, and replace dirty air filters. Avoid high speeds, as fuel efficiency decreases significantly at speeds over 60 mph. Do not idle! Go to www.fueleconomy.gov.
- 10 Recycle and compost your trash.** Most communities offer comprehensive recycling programs and hazardous waste days - take advantage of recycling as much of your "trash" as possible. Compost food scraps, grass, and leaves. Buy recycled products and products that use recycled packaging. Avoid using disposable shopping bags.
- 11 Buy locally grown food.** By buying locally grown food – look for farmer's markets – you are stimulating your local economy, preserving local farmland, and lowering emissions by cutting energy consumption for transportation. Consider eating less meat, which requires inordinate resources to produce. Use a refillable bottle for your water whenever possible.
- 12 Insulate and weatherize your home.** A free energy audit can help show you how to weatherize your home, which will reduce your heating and cooling needs. Some simple improvements include weather-stripping doors and windows and insulating attics and basements. Use environmentally sustainable materials for building projects, and buy environmentally friendly cleaning products whenever possible. In Massachusetts, call 800.632.8300 to make an appointment.
- 13 Offset carbon emissions from flight and vehicular use.** It takes 350 sugar maples one month to process the CO₂ from one round trip from Boston to Denver. Two good websites for carbon offsets: www.nativeenergy.com and www.zerofootprint.net.
- 14 SPREAD THE WORD!** Help you family and friends save energy and money. Educate yourself about climate change, talk to your friends, and do all you can to reduce your energy use.