

Climate Minute

Quaker testimony urges Friends to be good stewards “so that future generations may inherit an earth on which they can live in hope and dignity.”¹ As caretakers of our environment we are responsible for passing a habitable planet on to our children and future generations. While systemic change is necessary, we cannot wait for governing bodies to do what is needed: change must begin with individuals and groups of people acting together.

As Friends we affirm the overwhelming scientific consensus that greenhouse gases released by human activity are causing climate change, that these changes threaten life on our planet as we know it, and that we have a responsibility to address the very real threats that will impact both rich and poor. Those on earth who have contributed least to this crisis are likely to suffer most from it. Because our nation produces far more carbon emissions per capita than any other and has often resisted effective international efforts to tackle climate change, we have a special responsibility and opportunity as U.S. citizens to make a difference.

We have committed ourselves to be open to what the Spirit is calling us to do in response to these challenges. These are some of the responses we have made to these challenges as individuals or as a meeting. We hope others will join us.

- Support each other in making the lifestyle changes needed to reduce our own and our meeting’s carbon footprint
- Take part in a voluntary carbon tax on our use of carbon²
- Join with other faith congregations in providing leadership around these issues in our surrounding communities³
- Divest from fossil fuel companies and urge the organizations we are affiliated with to do so
- Bear public witness to the need to reduce carbon usage
- Build local economy and strengthen community
- Take other actions for a more just world that challenge cultural assumptions of a consumer economy and infinite growth.

In our meeting we commit ourselves to seasoning the leadings of those among us who are under the weight of a concern. We commit ourselves to support those who follow their concerns, even when this leads to difficult legal or economic consequences. George Fox, John Woolman, Lucretia Mott, and others have shown us how individuals' leadings and corporate witness can serve as models and examples leading over time to great changes in social custom and the economy. We believe that although the problems we face are large, complex, and may feel overwhelming, following our faith can lead us to unity and hope.

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1. Faith & Practice of NEYM, 1985, Stewardship, p.189
 2. See MountTobyFriends.org Action Tab
 3. Such as Interfaith Power & Light

Approved in the Mt Toby meeting for business, January 12, 2014.