

# ISSUES AND ACTIONS

June, 2006



## Global Warming

As we confront the world's greatest environmental threat, many of the transformative solutions will emerge from America, the country with the deepest reservoir of scientists, engineers, and bold investors. Together the environmental community with its millions of members and allies will arouse Americans to lead again.

*How do people look upon the reports of Global Warming? Where do you see yourself?*

1. It is already too late, the damage is irreversible.
2. Things are in bad shape but some miracle will happen and humanity will survive.
3. For an estimated 90% of humanity, it is an issue they never think about. The suggestion of John Dominic Crosson is that these need to be reintegrated into the community of empowerment.

*The Union of Concerned Scientists wants to reach that estimated 90% to empower them.*

American environmental organizations are joining forces in an unprecedented way to engage the public on global warming.

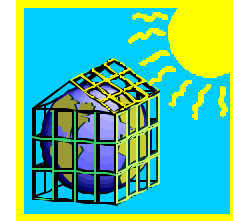
All of them agree that the rapid changes we are causing in our atmosphere are altering the planet in potentially devastating ways. We know for instance that over the past 30 years Arctic Sea Ice has shrunk by 400,000 square miles, an area the size of California and Texas combined.

They also agreed that our window of opportunity of avoiding disaster is closing fast. Without far-reaching action this decade, we will lock ourselves into a future of immeasurable dangers. The overwhelming majority of Americans agree that global warming is a problem and most believe it is man-made. What is missing is a sense of urgency and personal commitment to take action.

*We can start at home.* U.S. households emit more global warming pollution than most nations. But an energy conscious family can cut emissions by up to two-thirds. Three years ago we embraced the Earth Charter, and each

community chose an action to save our planet. The results were written up in a booklet entitled: *Opening the Global Heart*. — The Social Concerns Committee is again surveying the sisters to see what has been accomplished and this will be reported at the Assembly 2006. The name of the game is to cut back pollution. The Congregation is buying Toyota Prius cars; the Motherhouse is buying Fair Trade Coffee, which is shade grown and cuts back on pesticide use.

*What can be achieved?*



- If you use compact fluorescent light bulbs throughout your house: global warming pollution savings: About 500 lbs. per year, per household.
- Upgrade all your appliances to Energy Star standards. Global warming pollution savings: About 6,000 lbs. per year per household.
- Insulate and weather-strip your home. Global warming pollution savings about 6,000 pounds per year per household.
- Driving down emissions — Buy the most efficient car that meets your needs.
- Compare cars at [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov) Global warming pollution savings about 5,600 pounds per year.
- Increase the efficiency of your car. Keep your tires fully inflated, don't idle excessively, and avoid quick braking and heavy acceleration. Global Warming pollution savings: About 2,500 lbs. per year.
- Find out how much global warming pollution you create and how you compare to others: [www.fightglobalwarming.com](http://www.fightglobalwarming.com)

*As I write this at Casa Garcia, I noted that all the lamps have compact fluorescent light bulbs, thanks to Associate Arlene Baca-Cardera.*

Another encouraging sign is the Challenge extended to cities by the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Texas based nonprofit Solar Austin. They launched the Energy Freedom Challenge. It is the Mayor of Austin, Texas who took on the challenge to derive more than half of its electricity from renewable resources such as wind, solar and bio-energy. Increased use of renewable energy helps reduce global warming and air pollution enhances our energy security, saves consumers money, creates jobs, and boosts rural economies. When the Mayor of Austin reaches his goal, he will then choose the next city who will accept the challenge. And on and on.