22 Things You Can Do About Climate Change

*Making smart choices about **transportation, energy use, food, and shopping** can cut your emissions, save you money, and improve your health.*

Transportation is the single largest source of climate pollution in Bellingham. Do your part to avoid unnecessary emissions while saving money and getting a workout.

1. Make Smart Transportation Choices
Carpool, walk, bike, or take the bus whenever you can. Group your errands to save trips and combine them with your workout. You'll reduce a pound of carbon dioxide for every mile you don't drive while saving money and burning calories. Be rewarded for biking, busing or walking by signing up for Smart Trips: www.whatcomsmarttrips.org

2. Inflate Your Tires and Tune Up Your Vehicle
Simply keeping your tires inflated properly can improve gas mileage by 3.3%. Using the right oil grade helps, too. Other maintenance issues like a faulty oxygen sensor can cut fuel efficiency by 40%. Every gallon of gasoline saved keeps twenty pounds of carbon dioxide out of our air.

3. Reduce Idling
Waiting at an espresso stand, in a ferry lane, or in a school zone? After 30 seconds you've burned more fuel than it would take to restart your car. Idling gets you 0 miles per gallon. You can reduce pollution and save fuel by turning off your engine.

4. Buy a Fuel-Efficient Car
No sense in burning gas (and cash) if you don't need to. Fuel efficiency is improving every year, and hybrid and electric vehicles are getting more and more affordable. Savings from using less fuel helps pay off your investment and tax credits and rebates are available for electric cars and plug-in hybrids (more info here). Bellingham now has 12 public charging stations for electric cars, at least three of which are free. Find and compare fuel efficient vehicles of different classes using the US EPA SmartWay website.

5. Live Near Work and Other Services
The closer you live to where you need to be -- whether it's work, grocery stores, bus lines, or entertainment -- the fewer emissions you'll emit and the less money you'll spend getting there. Consider buying or renting close to your destinations.

Energy Use in our homes and businesses each make up about a quarter of Bellingham's climate pollution. It's easy to save on electricity and natural gas bills by making a few changes around your home or business. Energy conservation upgrades can also increase the value of your home. Your energy savings will help Bellingham win a national contest for $5 million. Visit www.bellinghamenergyprize.com to learn more and track your actual energy savings at the Energy Center.

1. Change Your Lightbulbs to LEDs

LED lightbulbs use at least 75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent lighting, and also beat out compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) without using mercury. Everything from kitchens to offices to Christmas trees can be lit with LEDs while saving lots of energy and expense. You can even get free LED lightbulbs with a home energy assessment (see below).

2. Get an Energy Assessment

Puget Sound Energy offers a free Residential Home Energy Assessment to determine how you can save energy. You can get up to 20 free LED lightbulbs, high-performance showerheads, and water-conserving faucet aerators as well. The Community Energy Challenge also provides a more comprehensive, low-cost energy assessment that offers numerous rebates and incentives on energy upgrades. On average, households save almost $500 in annual energy costs after completing CEC work.

3. Turn Off Electrical Devices and Use a Power Strip

Turning off your television, DVD player, stereo, computer, and other electronics when they're not in use will obviously save energy, save you money, and prevent greenhouse gas emissions. But did you know that many appliances still use power when they're turned off? Unplug appliances or use a power strip to cut off "phantom power," which can make up as much as 10 percent of your power bill.

4. Set Your Washing Machine to Use Cold Water and Turn Down Other Appliances

Cold water cleans just as well as warm water and saves a chunk of energy and money on your bill. Turn your other appliances down, too; they're probably set higher than they need to be: Your fridge only needs to be set to 38-40 degrees F and your freezer to 0 degrees F; your dishwasher and water heater can be turned down to 120 degrees.

5. Use a Clothesline

Use the sun to dry your clothes: it's free, it's clean, it's cosmic. Your dryer uses a lot of energy. Skip it on a sunny day.

6. Use a Programmable Thermostat

Why pay to heat and cool your home when you're not there? A programmable thermostat will shut your heat off when you leave, and warm your home up again before you get back. The EPA estimates that you can save $150 a year with a programmable thermostat.

7. Buy ENERGY STAR Appliances

Energy efficient appliances can save families about a third on their energy bill without sacrificing features, style, or comfort. The next time you buy a computer, stereo, or replace your refrigerator, hot water heater, or furnace, look for the label that tells you it will save you money and cut greenhouse gas pollution. www.energystar.gov

8. Buy Green Power

Did you know that Puget Sound Energy offers all their customers the choice to buy electricity from renewable sources? It's easy and inexpensive but it is one of the most effective things that you can do today: $4 a month prevents nearly two tons of carbon dioxide a year! Visit the Puget Sound Energy website or call 1-800-562-1482 to sign up.

9. Install Solar Panels on Your Home

Solar panels are more affordable than ever! State and federal incentives seriously cut costs while net-metering pays you for the surplus energy you generate. See current incentives and financing opportunities at the Solar Washington website. Also, check out the solar power potential of your roof using the National Renewable Energy Laboratory PVWatts Calculator.

Food production and distribution is responsible for 13% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Smart food choices can greatly cut your carbon footprint while improving your health.

Photo: Bellingham Farmers Market

1. Buy Locally Grown, Organic Food

Locally grown, organic foods don't have to be trucked long distances, refrigerated for weeks, and they require less energy to produce. Plus they are healthier, taste better, and buying them supports local jobs and businesses.

- Check out Bellingham Farmers Market or the grocers who support our local farms.
- Get a map of local farms at www.sustainableconnections.org/foodfarming
- Sign up for a Community Supported Agriculture share and have local produce delivered to your home or workplace.

2. Eat Less Dairy and Meat

Beef production requires 28 times more land, 11 times more water, and creates five times more greenhouse gases than pork or chicken, and 11 times more greenhouse gases than staples like potatoes, wheat, and rice. Lamb is even worse and cheese comes in third for the most carbon-intensive food. Lamb and cows produce methane, which is a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Join the Meatless Mondays campaign to avoid meat for an entire day each week and see health benefits as well.

3. Reduce Food Waste and Compost

Plan your food purchases carefully to make sure you can eat it all. Composting food scraps allows them to properly decompose, releasing carbon dioxide instead of methane, a much more powerful greenhouse gas that comes from landfills.

Shopping for various goods relies on an energy-intensive system of production and distribution that accounts for 29% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

1. Reduce

It's an age-old adage but it still makes sense: Live simply with fewer unnecessary consumer products and you'll save money and have a smaller impact on the planet.

2. Reuse

Try to repair what's broken before buying something new. Or give a second life to more affordable, reusable tools, building materials, appliances, and clothes at the ReStore, Appliance Depot, or a thrift store.

3. Recycle

Reusing and recycling products means we don't have to use energy to make new ones. Recycling alone can reduce your home's carbon dioxide emissions by 850 pounds per year. Call the Recycling Hotline at 676-5723 with questions about what to recycle and how.

4. Buy Locally Made Products

Bellingham is rich in local manufacturers and crafts people who make everything from clothes to solar panels. Buying locally made goods from locally owned businesses means less energy needed to ship products from afar, and supports a strong local economy.

5. Buy Durable Products

Cheap, disposable goods cause more waste. Paying a bit more upfront for a product that will last longer means you won't have to replace it as often.

Lastly, **Get Involved** in efforts to reduce greenhouse gases in our community and beyond with these organizations:

Sustainable Connections is a non-profit organization and a network of locally-owned, independent businesses promoting sustainable business practices through programs such as Sustainable Business Development, Green Building & Smart Growth, Food and Farming, Energy Efficiency & Renewables, and Think Local First.

Community Energy Challenge is an energy efficiency campaign in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties run by a partnership between Sustainable Connections, the Opportunity Council, Puget Sound Energy, Cascade Natural Gas, and others. The program provides whole-building energy assessments for homes and businesses resulting in a customized list of prioritized upgrades from no-cost to low-cost measures,

as well as financing options for larger retrofits. Participants can access utility rebate programs for lighting and insulation improvements, sealing, and more efficient appliances.

RE Sources helps community members actively safeguard the environment by providing information, trainings and workshops, and volunteer-led field programs. Programs include classroom climate change education in public schools, recycling education and advocacy, North Sound Baykeeper, Beach Naturalists, and the RE Store.

The Hub Community Bike Cooperative combines alternative transportation with reuse and recycling. The Hub offers self-service shop space for rent, high quality reconditioned bikes, professional full-service tune-ups and repairs, and bicycle parts for sale. The Hub reaches out to the greater Bellingham community through a variety of education efforts and events.

Western Washington University's Office of Sustainability incorporates sustainability into many areas of campus operations and academics through a commitment to energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction, sustainability-minded courses, and Western's Sustainability Committee.

Whatcom Smart Trips is an ongoing partnership between local government, public agencies, employers, and schools to promote transportation by bicycling, sharing rides, and riding the bus. Participants are rewarded for biking, busing or walking.

Whatcom Transit Authority's mission is to enhance our community by delivering safe, reliable, efficient and friendly service, offering environmentally sound transportation choices, providing leadership in creating innovative transportation solutions, and partnering with our community to improve transportation systems.

The Building Performance Center is a division of the Opportunity Council and an excellent source for home energy conservation resources. They provide training, consulting and retrofit services. In addition to fee-for-service work, they are able to provide free or reduced-fee services for those who are income qualified through the Opportunity Council's Home and Energy Services program.

The Northwest Clean Air Agency (NWCAA) promotes local programs to reduce greenhouse gas through public education and interagency collaboration. The NWCAA also uses outside resources from enforcement settlements to establish effective local programs.

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency works to protect public health, improve neighborhood air quality, and reduce our region's contribution to climate change.

The Climate Impacts Group is an interdisciplinary team of researchers at the University of Washington. They are the pre-eminent experts on the likely impacts of global warming on the Pacific Northwest.