

Low Carbon DietSM

A 30 Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds

Cool Community Campaign

Empowering Citizens To Go On A Low Carbon Diet

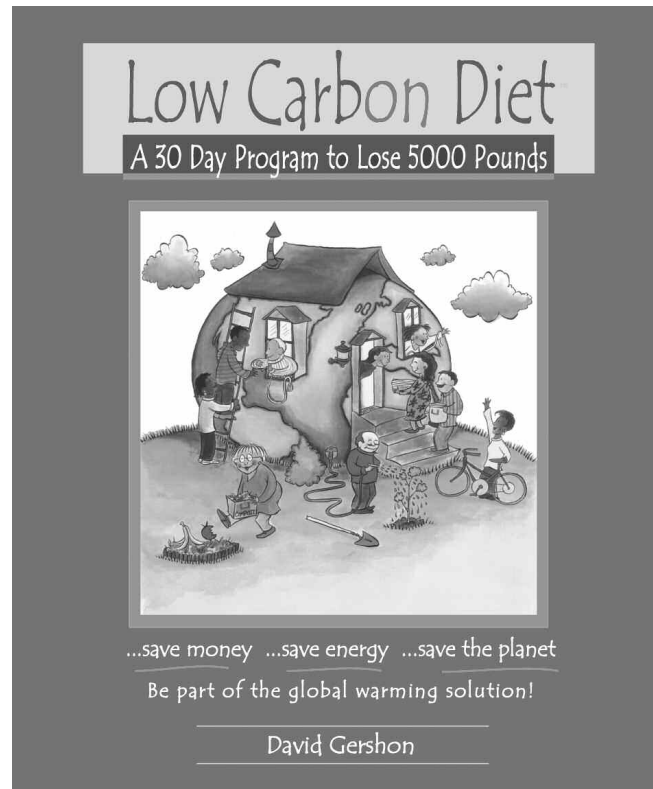
Global climate change is the major environmental threat facing our planet. Yet despite its global reach, climate change is very much a local issue. The causes of global warming come in large part from the everyday actions that take place in our communities with individuals accounting for almost 50% of a community's emissions. With this in mind, Empowerment Institute has initiated a pioneering new "Cool Communities Campaign" to enable cities to help citizens reduce their impact on global climate change.

Why We Should Act

Global warming refers to the rise in average temperature worldwide. The scientific consensus is that the warming we see today is largely the result of emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases from human activities. Through processes, like burning fossil fuel, and changes in land use, such as cutting down our forests, we have more CO₂ in the atmosphere now than at any time in our planet's history.

Global warming is changing the weather everywhere. While global warming does mean the average earth's temperature goes up, it does NOT mean it gets warmer everywhere. In fact, weather patterns are disrupted and skewed. In some places it gets hotter, some places colder, some places rainier and some places dryer.

A one-degree rise in average temperature can result in extreme temperature related disasters. To put this in perspective, the difference in average temperature between now and the last ice age is only 9 degrees. And the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, composed of the leading climate change scientists, estimates that due to human activities global temperatures will rise 2.5 to 10.4 degrees by 2100!



Climate change is already resulting in very erratic and adverse weather patterns. And with the large predicted rise in global temperature, scientists believe these weather patterns will get more adverse causing coastal flooding (where most of the world's population live), droughts, hurricanes, heat waves, tornadoes, decreased forest health, disruption of agriculture and the spread of tropical diseases.



A Low Carbon Diet

There are ways to address this problem and many cities are beginning to take action. One of the single most important things we can do is to use our resources more efficiently. The average American generates 55,000 pounds of CO₂ yearly. By comparison a typical resident of Sweden emits about 15,000 pounds of CO₂ while maintaining an equal standard of living. The difference is largely due to American's inefficient use of transportation and energy.

In response to this situation, Empowerment Institute has launched the Cool Community Campaign. It is the first comprehensive citywide residential CO₂ reduction campaign the United States. The Institute's citizen behavior change programs have garnered much international recognition and helped reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over a billion pounds.

Citizen-led teams join together to incorporate greenhouse gas reducing actions into their daily lives. Five to eight people – neighbors, friends, coworkers – form a team that meets four times over a 30 day period, selecting actions to take from the step-by-step program workbook. Choosing from a menu of practical actions, team members learn how to get on a 'Low Carbon Diet' by taking steps to reduce and offset carbon dioxide output which modern lifestyles produce. More than increasing awareness, the program enables people to change the way they use resources and measure the results. The program has been receiving enthusiastic participation with households reducing their CO₂ emissions by an average of 15% or 6,700 pounds.

A Cool Community Campaign provides an opportunity for citizens to directly improve the future prospects of our planet and those generations who will inhabit it. If you would like to start a Cool Community Campaign in your community, use the materials on this site or contact Empowerment Institute at the address below.

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