

## Zero Waste and Climate Change

### Zero Waste to Reduce Global Warming – 15 Steps Activists Can Do Now to Reduce Global Warming

<http://www.sierraclub.org/committees/zerowaste/>

#### How Sierra Club Chapters & Activists Can Help Pursue Zero Waste for Zero Cooling.

The following action items are suggestions for Chapters to help members, the public, and elected officials implement Zero Waste to reduce greenhouse gases and address climate change. The report “Stop Trashing the Climate” explains all the relationships between maximizing source reduction, reuse, recycling and composting and real reductions in the generation of greenhouse gases. And unlike longer term actions like increases vehicle miles per gallon (CAFÉ standards), these zero waste programs can be implemented right now using existing recycling and composting programs.

**First Step** – Read “Stop Trashing the Climate” [www.stoptrashingthecolimate.org](http://www.stoptrashingthecolimate.org)

#### Adopt a Zero Waste Goal and Plan for It<sup>1</sup>

1. Ask your local elected officials to adopt a resolution to establish a community-wide Zero Waste goal and a commitment to develop a plan to implement that goal. Do as a separate resolution or part of climate change plans.
2. Request opportunities to present concept of Zero Waste to communities to local elected officials and staff, including Council study sessions, Technical Advisory Committee meetings and meetings of statewide organizations (e.g., League of Cities, State Association of Counties, State recycling association, sustainable business groups).

#### Know Your Waste

3. Ask your local solid waste manager or recycling coordinator for information on the existing solid waste and recycling system in your community. Identify current reuse, recycling and composting policies, programs and facilities. Compare to best practices you’ve heard of from around the world (see list of resources below).

#### Design Waste Out

4. Design waste out of the system by holding producers and retailers responsible. Ask local retailers to takeback products and packaging for problem materials not included in residential recycling programs. Ask communities to ban products or packages from being sold or to require businesses and institutions to take back products and packaging that are toxic or damaging to wildlife in their manufacture, use, or disposal, and/or are not currently reusable, recyclable or compostable in your area.

#### Adopt Incentives and New Rules

5. Ask your community to adopt incentives<sup>2</sup> and new rules in Ordinances, contracts, franchises, permits, zoning, General Plans and garbage rate structures to make it cheapest to stop discarding materials, and reusing, recycling or composting them.
6. Ask your community to ban the use of yard trimmings collected from residents and businesses as “Alternative Daily Cover” (ADC) or “Alternative Intermediate Cover” (AIC).

#### Communities that have adopted Zero Waste goals around the U.S. (1-1-08)

Albuquerque, NM \*  
Austin, TX \*  
Boulder County, CO  
City of Boulder, CO  
Central Vermont Solid Waste Management Dist.  
New York City (Citizens ZW Plan developed, but not adopted by City)  
Seattle, WA  
Summit County, CO  
Matanuska-Susitna Borough, AK  
Logan County, OH  
Telluride, CO \*  
\* Developing ZW plan

#### And in California:

Apple Valley, Berkeley, Burbank, Culver City, Del Norte County, El Cajon, Fairfax, Los Angeles, Marin County, Novato, Oakland, Ocean Beach \*\*, Palo Alto, Rancho Cucamonga, San Francisco, San Jose, San Luis Obispo County, Santa Cruz County and all cities within the County  
\*\*(Neighborhood Council of City of San Diego)

<sup>1</sup> Many of these ideas based on CA Zero Waste Communities Strategy on how to create a Zero Waste Community:  
<http://www.crra.com/grc/articles/zwc.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/articles/loc\\_gov\\_zw\\_incentives.html](http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/articles/loc_gov_zw_incentives.html)

7. Ask your community to ban incinerators, or incinerators in disguise.

## Support Green Business and Green Jobs

8. Ask local businesses to adopt Zero Waste goals, to develop Zero Waste plans, to adhere to Zero Waste Business principles,<sup>3</sup> to meet waste diversion targets, and/or to source separate designated materials that can be reused, recycled or composted.
9. Support existing reuse, recycling and composting businesses and nonprofit organizations and help them expand and to site new facilities that are needed. Help develop locally owned and independent infrastructure, on an open, competitive basis.<sup>4</sup>
10. Help develop regional resource recovery parks to provide locations for expansion of reuse, recycling and composting businesses.<sup>5</sup> Support the funding of community Zero Waste initiatives with fees levied on wasting.

## Sierra Club Initiatives

11. Ask Sierra Club Political Committees to ask in written questionnaire of candidates whether they support Zero Waste and Extended Producer Responsibility and would they support their area adopting a Zero Waste Plan to pursue those goals.
12. Issue a “Zero Waste Challenge” like Los Angeles, or Austin, TX “Race to Zero Waste, or Pretty Darn Near” (see: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/sws/zerowaste.htm>)
13. Write stories for Chapter newsletters on these issues.
14. Get to know your local government recycling coordinator. Let them know your chapter wants to be involved in Zero Waste and if they hear from residents who want to get active to send them to the Chapter.
15. Join the Sierra Club Zero Waste Forum at <http://whistler.sierraclub.org/listsab/?listname=CONS-EQST-WASTE-FORUM> then visit <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/committees/zerowaste> Contact Ann Schneider, Chair, Zero Waste Committee - [Ann.Schneider@sierraclub.org](mailto:Ann.Schneider@sierraclub.org) for more information.

## Resources – first try - <http://www.sierraclub.org/committees/zerowaste/> as we are adding materials to our site all the time. Let us know what would help you expand zero waste actions.

- ◆ Zero Waste Videos: *The Story of Stuff* with Annie Leonard and *Zero Waste Systems* with Eric Lombardi: <http://www.grrn.org/video/>
- ◆ Only peer-reviewed, internationally accepted definition of Zero Waste: <http://www.zwia.org/standards.html>
- ◆ *Stop Trashing the Climate* report [www.stoptrashingtheclimate.org](http://www.stoptrashingtheclimate.org)
- ◆ EPA Webinars on Climate Change and Wasting (6-26, 7/16 and 8/5 from 1-3:30 pm PDT): <http://www.epa.gov/region10/westcoastclimate.htm>
- ◆ Compostable Organics Out of Landfills by 2012: COOL 2012 <http://www.cool2012.com/>
- ◆ Garbage is Not Renewable Energy: <http://www.grrn.org/landfill/notrenewableenergy/index.html>
- ◆ GrassRoots Recycling Network, Zero Waste Info: <http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/index.html>
- ◆ Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA): [www.no-burn.org](http://www.no-burn.org)
- ◆ Zero Waste for Zero Warming, GAIA campaign: <http://www.zerowarming.org/>
- ◆ CA Global Warming Solutions Act (AB32), Economic and Technology Advancement Advisory Committee (ETAAC) Final Report (pages 105-112 address Waste reduction, Recycling and Resource Management): <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/etaac/ETAACFinalReport2-11-08.pdf>
- ◆ Profiles of Zero Waste Businesses that have diverted 90% of their waste from landfills and incinerators: ZW Businesses: <http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/business/profiles.php>; <http://www.earthresource.org/zerowaste.html>
- ◆ Zero Waste Business Principles: <http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/business/>; <http://www.zwia.org/standards.html>
- ◆ List of Zero Waste Communities <http://www.zwia.org/zwc.html>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/business/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.crra.com/irc/guide.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ci.wmb.ca.gov/LGLibrary/Innovations/RecoveryPark/>