

The “Low Carbon Diet” & Collective Action to Stop Global Warming

By Loie Hayes

Global warming is so scary that many people want to hide. They don't want to even think about it. But facing a problem – naming the monster that's breathing fire at you – is a necessary first step for survival. That frees you from paralysis and fear. Then you have to decide how you're going to slay the monster. Working with friends and neighbors will greatly increase your chances of success.

One way to address global warming is to join with neighbors and put your home on a “low carbon diet.” Following a 5-step program explained in *Low Carbon Diet: A 30 Day Program to Lose 5,000 pounds*, you and your neighbors can save energy, save money, and slow global warming!

STEP 1: Form a Low Carbon Diet group. Talk to people in five or more households and agree to meet together four times.

STEP 2: Start the Diet by “weighing in.” Measure your *carbon footprint* by looking at your utility bills and travel expenses.

STEP 3: Use the workbook to learn about energy conservation and other ways your household can reduce carbon emissions.

STEP 4: Choose from a menu of actions to reduce your emissions. Use the workbook to track how many pounds of carbon emissions you lose. The goal? Everyone should lose at least 5,000 pounds.

STEP 5: Inspire others to lose weight too. Losing 5,000 pounds in your own home is great, but think about what happens when the idea spreads.



Last winter in Massachusetts, 75 homes combined to pledge carbon savings of over 200 tons. That's like taking 100 SUVs off the road for a year!

Nationally and internationally, more than 20,000 people have used The Diet to save a billion pounds of *carbon emissions* annually.

What Happens Next?

The solution to the climate crisis just *begins* when we stop wasting energy personally. From greening our homes, we could move on to greening our work, school, or religious congregation. Building from the power of all these groups, we could advocate for increased mass transit budgets and decreased oil subsidies. We could lobby for *green job* training. Take any action that makes a positive change and remember that the most powerful actions are those that inspire others to act.

Loie Hayes is a writer, editor, and member of Boston Climate Action Network. She put her house on a low carbon diet in 2007 and has helped dozens of other households do the same. Order Low Carbon Diet at <www.empowermentinstitute.net/lcd>.

