

Carolina Friends School Climate Change Declaration
3/16/2013 Draft

Statement of Concern

We, the Upper School students of Carolina Friends School, are troubled by climate change and the state of the world we will inherit. We recognize our need to come together for action in the face of this crisis and have arrived at consensus on the following beliefs and actions.”

Scientific Background

We acknowledge (1) that the Environmental Protection Agency has reported that there has been a 0.7 degree Celsius rise in global temperatures over the last century, and that temperatures are expected to rise an additional degree to 5.2 degree Celsius over the next century; (2) that the EPA has reported that this increase has been accompanied by more intense weather patterns, including floods, droughts, and heat waves; (3) that the EPA has reported that human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels, are largely responsible for these recent changes to our climate; (4) that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has reported that the current concentration of CO₂ in our atmosphere is 396 parts per million and rising; (5) that NASA has reported that human societies and all ecological life are adapted to levels of CO₂ below 350ppm; (6) that NASA has reported that CO₂ levels above 350ppm risk triggering feedback cycles that will likely destabilize social and ecological life on earth as we know it.

Scientific Recommendation

We acknowledge (1) that NASA scientists have recommended that we decrease atmospheric CO₂ to levels below 350 ppm; (2) that the United Nations has said that world leaders should sign a climate change treaty by 2015 that would limit global temperature rises to 2 degrees Celsius, yet even with this limit the world is set to experience “dire consequences”; (3) that the United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel has recommended that all societies decrease their emissions of greenhouse gases by 80% by 2050 to avoid further temperature rises; (4) that the International Energy Agency has reported that the world must invest \$45 trillion, or 1.1% of the world’s GDP, to address climate change now, and that for every \$1 that we do not spend on the challenge before 2020, we can expect to spend \$4.30 later.

Our Role

As students at Carolina Friends School, we recognize (1) that addressing climate change is an embodiment of our commitment to stewardship; (2) that the United States produces at least 20% of the world’s CO₂ emissions, and therefore as U.S. citizens we have a heightened responsibility to be vigilant in local, state, and national governments; and (3) that as students at a Quaker school, we must draw upon our history as organizers and our fortune of institutional support to be leaders on climate change.

School Level

We commit to help *administrators* at Carolina Friends School continue to enact the Board of Trustee’s 2008 Long-Range Strategic Plan to move CFS toward being “a laboratory in sustainability— implementing best practices, introducing and testing technologies and strategies, and modeling responsible environmental stewardship.”

We commit to help the *School Stewardship Committee* and *facility leaders* assess our school's carbon footprint and aid in the drafting of a Carbon Neutral Action Plan. We commit to help these leaders find a way for our community to decrease its current greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.

We invite our *teachers* to collaborate and consider ways that their curriculum, resource use, and classroom practices relate to climate change and are preparing us to address our generation's major challenge.

We ask that the entire *student body* unite and take concerted action to decrease our school's carbon footprint. We commit to participate in climate-change decision-making at every level of our lives, especially in our families and at school. We commit to educate ourselves about climate change and learn what we must do address its causes and reverse its effects.

With concerted effort, our school community stands to live out its commitment to stewardship, model conscionable action, and pass on a sustainable world to future generations. If we do not act, we will destroy the legacy that our school's generations have sought to build.

Local and State Level

We commit to help local and state leaders use their power to (1) decrease our communities' reliance upon fossil fuels (add specific reduction with date); (2) address deforestation and logging practices that destroy carbon sinks; (3) support local, organic farming activities; (4) build systems, such as mass transit and bike lanes, to decrease our reliance upon carbon-emitting vehicles; (5) stimulate local Green economies and help workers in fossil fuel-related industries find paths to new employment; (6) find ways to decrease consumption and increase recycling; (7) find ways to put an end to fossil fuel use, including fracking and off-shore drilling, and encourage the use of renewable energy sources; (8) teach local citizens how to better weatherize their homes and places of work; and (9) commit to LEED Certification on all new construction.

With concerted effort, we can help leaders create communities in which citizens may live productive lives while tending to the needs of the surrounding ecosystems. Furthermore, we will be able to position our communities to take advantage the Green economy. If we do not act, we risk destabilizing our ecological environment and render civic life impossible.

National Level

We commit to help our national leaders pass legislation that (1) places aggressively-rising, revenue-neutral prices on carbon; (2) mandates that the nation stop burning coal; (3) mandates that we cease burning fossil fuels for electricity generation; (4) mandates that we stop burning fossil fuels in every realm of daily life; (5) incorporates the impact that domestic and imported consumables have upon our CO2 levels, and adjust regulations accordingly; (6) moves our country toward a Green economy, which incentivizes sustainable practices, creates jobs, and depends upon renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and tidal power generation.

With concerted effort, we stand to help national leaders build a future in which human activities can coexist with our natural environment in harmonious interdependence. If we do not act, we risk living in a wrecked economy, and world, with increased conflict and instability.

Global Level

We commit to help global leaders create and sign international treaties that will (1) decrease the world's CO2 levels to 350 ppm as soon as possible; (2) stop burning coal; (3) stop burning fossil fuels; (4) address the imbalanced sociopolitical impacts and responsibilities of global climate change in acknowledgment that those who are poor, live in coastal areas, or depend upon agriculture as a means of subsistence, are disproportionately affected.

With concerted effort, we stand to live out humanity's compassionate potential. If we do not act, we risk turning those whose lives are damaged by climate change-induced events against those who, by luck or wealth, persist.

Conclusion

As in the past, all daunting challenges seem insurmountable until they are overcome. We call upon our own strengths and the strengths of others to engage in this work of creating a sustainable future. Continuing into the future in the way that we have been is not an option. As students in 2013, we cannot wait until we occupy positions of power to enact these changes; we must join together and act now.

We commit ourselves to achieving these goals and call upon every person to join us in this work. With hope, courage, and resolve, and in solidarity for a better world, we are the Upper School students of Carolina Friends School.