

A Guide to Environmental Action, Donation & Support

Courtesy of Jordan Wolfson Studio, 2017

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Tips On Donating

1. **All donations to nonprofits are tax deductible.** More on this on **Page 16**.
2. **Not all charities are equal.** Check to make sure that money you give to the nonprofit organization (**NPO**) is going toward their causes and not administrative costs. Charity Navigator offers an excellent free tool for checking this.
3. **Avoid scam charities/fakes.** Some organizations use names similar to well-known groups in order to leech off their donations. At the end of this directory is a list of such organizations to avoid.
4. Bundle your donation money toward a couple charities that you want to support the most. Charities hire people to follow up with donors & often use mailings to remind donors to donate again at a later date, all of which may eat up their budget.
Therefore, a more substantial donation to a smaller number of organizations means that more money is going toward the organization's cause, & not on postage/paper/administrative staffing.
5. When you make your donation, include a kind request for the organization to not mail you solicitations for future donations or to include you on any mailing lists. You may even wish to assure the organizations that you will donate annually, so these reminders won't be needed. **This will help offset the carbon footprint of your gift & will save paper/resources!**

An Environmental NPO Directory^{1 2 3}

Lobbyists + Legal Action

Earthjustice

Motto: “Because the Earth needs a good lawyer.” A group of experienced lawyers that pursue environmentally-protecting cases that focus on “high-impact, precedent-setting battles” against polluters & large corporations. Currently representing the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its lawsuit against the Dakota Access Pipeline case.

www.earthjustice.org

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

Fights to create a clean energy future, protect endangered species & habitats, & revive the world’s oceans. Organizes its 1.4 million members to protect wild places, & employs a team of over 350 lawyers to pursue environmental protection cases—NRDC helped pass the Clean Air Act & the Clean Water Act.

www.nrdc.org

Southern Environmental Law Center

Works in the courtroom to protect the environment in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, & Virginia. Has marshaled opposition to offshore drilling; compelled Duke Energy to clean up its toxic coal ash sites; has an initiative to remove legislative/tax roadblocks to new solar energy programs; permanently safeguarded 700,000+ acres of forest from logging, roadbuilding, or any other destruction; has successfully challenged dozens of road/highway building projects; currently defending the only population of red wolves still living in the wild.

www.southernenvironment.org

Conservation/Activist Groups Concerning...

...Climate Action

350.org

International campaign dedicated to fighting climate change. Organizes protests & direct action in 188 countries & serves as a mouthpiece for the climate movement writ large.

www.350.org

Union of Concerned Scientists (USC)

A national network of scientists who focus on clean energy solutions, combatting climate change, & issues related to large-scale food production. Key witnesses in several pieces of important U.S. green legislation.

www.ucsus.org

...Wildlife/Habitat Preservation

American Cetacean Society

This organization protects whales, dolphins, porpoises, & their habitats by educating the public about the problems these animals face.

www.acsonline.org

Cool Earth

Works with indigenous groups worldwide who live on the front lines of rainforest deforestation. Its mission is to economically empower these peoples as rainforest stewards, so as to discourage future deforestation.

www.coolearth.org

Defenders of Wildlife

Known primarily for work defending endangered species & their habitats. Helped convince the UN to ban large scale driftnet fishing to save dolphins & other species.

www.defenders.org

Environmental Defense

Originally the Environmental Defense Fund, this group has 4,000,000 members & leads a variety of environmental campaigns.

www.edf.org

Global Coral Reef Alliance

This group focuses on coral reef restoration, marine diseases, & other issues caused by climate change & pollution.

www.globalcoral.org

Greenpeace

Famous for ant-whaling efforts worldwide, also works to preserve deep sea life & protect oceans from pollution & oil spills.

www.greenpeace.org

Humane Society

Largest animal advocacy + protection group in the United States. Operates animal rescues/sanctuaries/shelters/care centers.

www.humanesociety.org

Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)

A grassroots group of Indigenous American peoples who advocate environmental protection & economic justice issues, developing mechanisms to protect sacred sites, l&, water, & natural resources.

www.ienearth.org

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

A group of direct-action protestors who protect marine life. They operate nine sea vessels & sabotage whale & seal hunting missions, scuttle whaling vessels, & destroy nets at sea. The Japanese government has referred to them as “eco-terrorists” for their actions against Japanese whale hunters.

www.seashepherd.org

Sierra Club

The oldest & largest environmental group in America. Has an ambitious marine wing that protects ocean habitats & wildlife as well as its main conservation organization.

www.sierraclub.org

Whale & Dolphin Conservation Society

This group works for the conservation & welfare of whales, dolphins & porpoises.

<http://us.whales.org>

Wildlife Conservation Society

Seeks to save animals & wild spaces. Runs a Marine Conservation Program that provides information related to the maintenance, conservation, & recovery of marine wildlife populations.

www.wcs.org

World Wildlife Federation (WWF)

Internationally known & very highly rated organization dedicated to protecting biodiversity in forests, oceans, & fresh water.

www.worldwildlifefund.org

...Food + Agriculture

Environmental Working Group (EWG)

Publishes consumer guides & spreads awareness about toxins in foods, cosmetics, cleaning products, & more. EWG also promotes sustainable agricultural practices.

Publishes an annual “Dirty Dozen” list revealing the highest pesticide concentrations in conventionally-grown produce.

www.ewg.org

Rainforest Alliance

Provides independent certification of common rainforest food products such as chocolate, coffee, bananas, & tea; producers must meet strict sustainability standards to gain their certification.

www.rainforest-alliance.org

...Renewable Energy

The Solutions Project

An organization committed to shifting our society to 100% renewable energy sources, which they define as solar, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, & wave/tidal power. Offers a “50 States 50 Plans” initiative that offers each U.S. state a specific plan of action it could take to be 100% renewable energy-powered.

<http://thesolutionsproject.org/>

...Environmental Research

Coastal Ocean Institute

This organization promotes scientific research into coastal waters & ecosystems.

Monitored the “red tide” in the Northeast.

www.who.i.edu

Marine Conservation Biology Institute: This group functions as an ocean think tank, bringing scientists together to examine marine conservation issues & sign public letters & statements. It also does policy research to "frame the marine conservation agenda" & produces publications to educate scientists, the public, & decision-makers.

www.marine-conservation.org

Pew Institute for Ocean Science

The institute & its fellows conduct, sponsor, & promote scientific research aimed at protecting the world's oceans & the species that inhabit them.

www.pewtrusts.org

Anti-Environmental Groups with Misleading Names: Avoid!

The Institute of Cetacean Research

A Japanese government-funded front for whale hunting that parades as science.

<http://www.icrwhale.org/eng-index.html>

International Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources

A group that works to loosen environmental regulation & increase corporate profitability at the expense of habitats/wildlife.

www.ifcnr.org

Sustainable Use Parliamentarians Union

This organization proclaims support for any fishing interest, including whaling. Its officials claim that the international moratorium on whaling is a violation of human rights.

U.S. House Committee on Resources

The nexus of anti-conservation forces in the U.S. government, this group purports itself as a watchdog for energy, fish, wildlife, forests, & water. In reality, it grants developers & logging companies access to national forests, supports off-shore oil drilling, & wants to 'modernize' the Endangered Species Act.

<http://naturalresources.house.gov>

Offset your CO2 Footprint by Purchasing Carbon Offsets

Terra Pass

Use **Terra Pass** to calculate the size of your carbon footprint, & to purchase the matching amount of “R.E.C” (Renewable Energy Credits) to **offset it**. Businesses & individuals can purchase REC’s to offset flights, weddings, or other events; or you can partner Terrapass with your company in order to offset all of your business activities/manufacturing. These purchases are funneled into wind, solar, biomass, & other renewable energy sources, so each Terrapass purchase affects positive change in our energy grid—the very same day!

www.terrapass.com

Carbonfund.org

Similar to Terra Pass, Carbon Fund allows individuals and businesses to purchase carbon offsets to mitigate their CO2 footprint. We like the streamlined design of their carbon purchases, allowing an individual to buy an annual offset, or choose from a list of offsets for Vehicles, Homes, Flights, and even Gifts. Businesses can do the same and buy the appropriate number of offsets for per their business size! Your purchase goes toward third-party validated renewable energy production, energy efficiency and reforestation projects.

www.carbonfund.org

Individual Action⁴

Some strategies to reduce your carbon footprint. You may see health benefits & save money as a result!

Easy Lifestyle Changes

1. **Eat less meat.** Switching to a diet light on (or free of) industrially-produced meat is good for your health & the environment. Livestock produce more methane than all the world's cars, & methane warms the climate more than CO₂. Having trouble switching your diet over? Try implementing a **Meatless Monday** with your family & friends, then slowly raise the number of meals per week that you eat meat-free.
2. **Recycle at home.** Learn about your area's recycling capabilities & always use them. Create a **compost bin** to turn your food scraps into fertilizer for your garden.
3. **Choose products with less packaging at the store.** Packaging requires more energy to produce; furthermore, increased package size means fewer packages can fit in each truck, putting more trucks on the road. Buy in bulk from the store & bring your own reusable bag.
4. **Do NOT drink bottled water.** If you don't like the way your tap water tastes, invest in a water filter. If you must purchase bottled water, buy the largest containers available to cut down on waste.
5. **Thrift shop for furniture, home goods, and clothes.** Other good places to check for unique used items are craigslist and ebay. (And make use of ebay's Local Pickup instead of shipping whenever possible.)

Saving Energy at Home

Remember: Less electricity used = less pollution.

1. **Switch off/unplug appliances when not in use.**
2. Use **energy efficient lighting**. LED, CFL, & halogen incandescent lightbulbs use up to **80% less energy** & last as much as **25 times longer** than traditional incandescent lightbulbs.
3. **Buy energy efficient appliances** whenever possible.
4. **Insulate, install efficient windows & doors, & plug air leaks.** Proper insulation, air sealing, & double/triple paned windows save you money & energy output. If your house is still chilly or you can't make structural changes, bundle up!
5. **Installing a programmable thermostat** can keep you from wasting energy while you're at work or sleeping.
6. **Put a UV coating on your windows.** A thin coating of UV filter can be applied to your windows, which traps heat in the winter & helps deflect heat in the summer. It's a cheaper alternative than upgrading your windows to double or triple paned glass.
7. **Make your landscaping agree with the climate you live in.** "Go Local" with your landscaping & use native species of flora instead of water-hungry imported Bermuda Grass. Not only will you save water, you'll be providing habitat for local species of fauna & pollinators. For Los Angeles dwellers, look into planting cacti & rock gardens!

Climate-friendly Commuting

1. **Walk or ride your bike, scooter, rollerblade, or skateboard.** You'll see health benefits as opposed to driving, & reduce CO2 emissions at the same time!
2. **Public Transit.** Sometimes it's too far to walk or bike. In these instances, take the **train, ferry, subway, light rail, or bus!** Is your area lacking in public transit options or safe bike lanes/bike racks? Draft a petition & pressure local legislators to make it a reality!
3. When you need to drive, **carpool.** Double up drives with coworkers or friends. If you must take a taxi, consider more eco-friendly features like **Uber Pool.**
4. **Avoid flying.** Aviation is the worst offender when it comes to commuting-related pollution. Always try to drive or take a bus instead. If you do drive, use a **car share service** such as **liftshare.com** or **craigslist shared rides** (it will also save you money on gas & tolls!)
5. **If you must own a car, consider an electric vehicle.** They pollute less, & constant technology breakthroughs are making them more affordable/efficient all the time. Plus, your investment in this industry helps fund future breakthroughs.

Collective Action

Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL)

A nonprofit grassroots advocacy organization that focuses on national policies to address climate change. Click [here](#) to join the national organization, & then join your local **CCL** chapter!

Sierra Club

You can join the Sierra Club as a citizen lobbyist whether as a paid staff member or volunteer. Dem& change for environmental causes, call & email senators, participate in lobby meetings, write letters to editors of newspapers, etc.

Check with your state's Sierra Club Chapter for more information.

350.org

Mentioned earlier as a nonprofit, this group offers many opportunities both locally & nationally to agitate for climate change awareness & action. It provides a platform to join local climate groups in your area, or even start one of your own! For more information, visit [here](#)!

...or start your own! Make your voice heard by meeting with other activists about climate action, educate your friends & the public on key climate issues, or agitate for better public transit options in your area!

Green Gifts

American Forests

Plant a tree in someone's name.

<https://www.americanforests.org/ways-to-give/gift-of-trees/>

National Research Defense Council

You can make donations to be an "Elephant Hero", "Bee a Hero", "Ocean Protector", "Kitten Keeper" (to protect bobcats); or plant trees in Costa Rica. A donation is made in the name of the person you want to give the gift to, & you can be mailed or e-mailed a card explaining the good your donation does.

<https://www.nrdcgreengifts.org>

SolarAid

Offers a \$10 Christmas card that can be mailed to you or whoever you choose. Each donation goes to replacing kerosene lamps in Africa with solar panels. Kerosene lamp pollution is a huge polluter; each card averts 1.5 tons of CO2 emissions.

<https://solar-aid.org/shop/>

Trees for the Future

Buy a tree in someone's name! And you can name the amount of your donation.

www.treesforthefuture.org

World Wildlife Federation

Offers species adoption kits for \$55 that includes a plush animal, certificate, & gift bag; "Frontline Hero" dolls; clothing, home goods, calendars, etc.

gifts.worldwildlife.org

...On Making Taxable Donations⁵

1. **Verify that your donation is tax-deductible.** To qualify, the org must be **501(c)(3)**. Common types of valid organizations are public charities, colleges, & religious groups. The IRS has a searchable database to easily check this [here](#).
2. You can donate **money, stocks, & appreciated properties, such as securities, real estate, art, jewelry, or antiques.** If you have owned the property for more than one year, you can deduct its full fair market value & escape income tax on its appreciation. For items over \$500, you need to fill out **Form 8283** along with your return, & you may need an appraisal to verify the worth of the item.
3. Make sure you **get (& save) your receipt, cancelled check, or letter** from the organization to verify your donation amount if you wish to write it off. For example, putting cash in the Salvation Army bucket is not tax deductible!
4. **You can donate up to 50% of your adjusted gross income** to charities & nonprofit organizations. Sometimes your donations can drop you into a lower tax bracket, which may offer you substantial savings come tax time.
5. The out-of-pocket expenses you incur while doing **Volunteer Service** are also tax-deductible. Such expenses may include what you pay for materials, supplies, uniforms, stationary, stamps, parking, & tolls. You can also deduct 14 cents per mile of driving to & from volunteer work, as well as public transit fares you spent to arrive there. However, the value of the services you provide as a volunteer are **not** tax deductible. For instance, a lawyer volunteering his/her professional services could not deduct for the usual value of such services.

Further reading on how to properly give/deduct taxable donations

Switching Utilities to Green Sources

NYC

Con Edison – to set up service, call 1-888-320-8991

Offers Green Energy alternatives that are delivered using their regular service—all you need to do is sign up. There is no switching fee & no penalty for cancelling.

Click [here](#) to get started!

National Grid

Offers a **GreenUp** program that allows you to choose to have all or part of your electricity generated from renewable resources, while keeping National Grid as your supplier.

Choosing an ESCO

If you want to get more involved with your energy choice, you can choose the **ESCO (ENERGY SERVICE COMPANY)** that supplies your energy to National Grid or Con Edison. Your choice of an ESCO only affects the “supply” portion of your electricity bill, but not the “delivery” portion (because the deliverer will still be Con Ed or National Grid.)

There are at least 83 ESCO's in the NYS area, so it's useful to do your research about which you prefer to use. Some resources to get started:

1. Con Ed's **Choose Energy** site lets you compare electricity & natural gas costs by zip code.
2. New York State's **website** on comparing ESCO's
3. Con Ed's **Power Your Way site** lists all the Green Power Providers (ESCOs) in New York State.

Green Energy, continued

Los Angeles

Green Power Program through LADWP

Allows citizens in the Los Angeles area to switch their power over to green energy through the LADWP (Los Angeles Department of Water & Power.) You pay a small monthly fee atop your bill to use clean-generated energy.

Call (213) 367-4854 to get started

Or visit [here](#) !

Sources

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² Stonebrook, Shelley. "10 Environmental Nonprofit Organizations That Are Changing the World." *Mother Earth News*. April/May 2014. <http://www.motheearthnews.com/nature-&-environment/environmental-policy/environmental-nonprofit-organizations-zmgz14amzsto>

³ "Where to Donate? 10 High-Impact Environmental Charities with Integrity." *Eartheasy.com*. December 4, 2014. <http://learn.eartheasy.com/2014/12/where-to-donate-10-high-impact-environmental-charities-with-integrity/>

⁴ "Individual action: what you can do about climate change." *Greenpeace.org*. July, 2016. <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/climate-change/Solutions/What-you-can-do/>

⁵ "Charitable Contributions." *TurboTax*. 2016. <https://turbotax.intuit.com/tax-tools/tax-tips/Tax-Deductions-&-Credits/Charitable-Contributions/INF12011.html>