

# 20 Twenty Steps for a Green Holiday Season and a Lower-Carbon New Year

The Holiday season is a joyous time of year. Whether you're celebrating Hanukkah, Christmas, or Kwanzaa, the Holidays are a time for families to reconnect, spend time together, and share memories. The holidays are a time for delighting children, for remembering the needy, and, of course, for gift-giving.

And the best gift we can give this year is a livable planet. Today, the North Pole is literally melting away as a result of global warming. This is bad news not just for polar bears and Santa Claus, but for all of us. Already, increased droughts and flooding, more extreme storms, and other effects of global warming are affecting people around the world, with particular impacts on the world's poor. And our children face a potentially dangerous future of climate impacts if we don't act now to cut our global warming emissions.

That's why, in the spirit of the Holiday season, Greenpeace is urging all Americans to celebrate this year and every year with an eye towards reducing their global warming impacts.

In addition, we urge Congress and the incoming Obama administration to make—and keep—a New Year's resolution to stop global warming and ensure we have Happy Holidays for generations to come.

## Ten Things You Can Do to Cut your Global Warming Pollution this Holiday Season

1. **Less is More:** Every item you give is manufactured, shipped, and packaged separately, and all that means more global warming pollution. Instead of buying the kids on your list lots of cheaper little gifts, consider giving one bigger, higher quality gift. And consider shopping on trading and recycling sites like [Craigslist.org](http://Craigslist.org) and [Freecycle.org](http://Freecycle.org). Since kids often outgrow their toys quickly, these sites are a great way to find like new toys at little or no cost while doing good for the environment. For friends and relatives, give "experiences," like gift certificates for restaurants, movies, and plays. You'll spend the same amount of money (or less), and chances are your friends and family will be happier too.
2. **Look for environment-friendly gifts:** If nothing but a shiny new gift will do, here are some specific things to look for (and avoid) when picking out presents:
  - Avoid products that are heavily packaged.
  - Avoid products made from PVC or from tropical wood, such as mahogany.
  - Look for appliances with the EPA's Energy Star label and check Energy Guide yellow sticker for energy use rating, which are more energy efficient than conventional models.
  - Before buying that laptop or video game, check out our latest Guide to Greener Electronics (<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/news/greener-electronics-guide-nov2008>).
  - Replace the conventional alkaline batteries with Lithium Ion rechargeable batteries (not NiCd or Nickel Cadmium, which contain toxic cadmium) and include a battery charger with the gift.

3. Request ground shipping: Ground shipping is six times more efficient than overnight air shipping. It saves fuel and reduces global warming pollution. Do your online and catalog shopping early and you'll be able to request ground shipment. Again, this is not only good for the environment but also the pocketbook.
4. Buy a Live, Potted Tree: You can plant your live tree outside after the holidays or donate it to a local school or park. Small, potted trees are a great option as they can be kept in their pot and used again next year. If you use a cut tree, go to [Earth911.com](http://Earth911.com) to find a tree recycler nearby. You can even chip the tree yourself and use it to mulch your garden. If you do buy an artificial tree, make sure that it is not made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC).
5. Replace your old lights with LED bulbs: Holiday lights use a lot of energy, especially when left on around the clock. In fact, traditional holiday lights generate as much global warming pollution as about 250,000 cars annually, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists. So, when you're decking the halls, start by replacing your old lights with LED bulbs. They use a tenth of the energy of mini-bulbs and a hundredth of the energy of incandescent bulbs! After switching to LEDs, only use the lights when you are going to enjoy them—in the evening. Or try solar LEDs, which use no electricity at all!
6. Use natural and/or homemade decorations: Gingerbread cookies, popcorn strings, candy canes and cinnamon sticks are a great alternative to the store-bought variety and are a fun project for young children. There are tons of resources and how-tos for homemade and natural holiday decoration around the Internet, but two good ones are [holidaycrafts4kids.com](http://holidaycrafts4kids.com) and [www.hgtv.com](http://www.hgtv.com) (the website of the Home and Gardens channel).
7. Reduce use of paper and recycle: Send e-cards to friends, reuse last year's wrapping paper, and write names directly on the wrapped gifts. Remember to save this year's paper too! When entertaining, avoid using disposable cups, plates, utensils and napkins. If you do use disposables, always choose recycled paper products. And when it's all over, be sure to recycle all those cans, bottles, and cardboard boxes.
8. Avoid paper invitations: Paper cards are nice, but a phone call is better. Or you can send email invites.
9. Make your holiday dinner a low-carbon feast: There are several steps you can take to cut the global warming impact of your holiday dinner. Consider these:
  - Buy organic. Organic agriculture produces far less global warming pollution than conventional. Agriculture is responsible for 13.5% of global warming pollution worldwide.
  - Buy locally grown produce and meats. Food travels an average of 1,500 miles or more by train or truck from the farm to the supermarket, causing a lot of pollution. Go to [www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org) to find a list of local farmers near you.
  - Go vegetarian for holiday dinner. Meat production generally results in much more global warming pollution than non-meat food. A great source of delicious recipes that even meat-eaters will love is the Moosewood Cookbook.
  - Cook with in-season foods like winter squash and other seasonal produce. Again there are tons of recipes available on-line at places like <http://www.foodnetwork.com/in-season-now/index.html>.
10. Save energy and lower your heating bill: Here are some simple steps to reduce your energy usage and heating bills (you can find more at Greenpeace's Green Tips for Every Day Living):
  - Conserve fuel by turning down the heat at night and while you are away from home—or install a programmable thermostat.
  - Insulate your home against heat loss and periodically check insulation.
  - Fix air leakage with weather-stripping and caulking.
  - In the winter, change your furnace air filters once a month. The heater uses more energy when it is full of dust.
  - Insulate your electric hot water heater and pipes.

# Ten Things Congress and the New President **Must** Do to Solve Global Warming in the New Year

1. Enact science-based legislation to prevent the worst effects of global warming. The Nobel Prize-winning U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that to keep worldwide temperatures from increasing to truly dangerous levels, developed nations must cut emissions by at least 25-40% from 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050.
2. Work with other nations to reach an ambitious, science-based global warming treaty in time for the global climate negotiations in Copenhagen at the end of 2009.
3. Make polluters pay for the right to pollute by auctioning carbon permits under the global warming pollution emissions cap and use the revenue for public benefits.
4. Allow California and 13 other states to implement their clean cars programs, which will require global warming emissions cuts from automobiles.
5. Invest \$50 billion in clean energy and energy efficiency in 2009 and provide no new subsidies for dirty energy sources like coal and nuclear power.
6. Use the Clean Air Act to declare that global warming pollution endangers public health and welfare and to set standards for power plants, vehicles, and fuels.
7. Require that fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions be considered in all federal purchasing decisions and direct federal agencies to assess global warming impacts of their actions.
8. Use existing Clean Air Act authority to require power plants to install the best pollution controls available to cut global warming pollution.
9. Establish a regulatory system which contains, prevents and reduces emissions of refrigerant “f-gases,” potent chemical global warming pollutants used in refrigeration and air conditioning
10. Establish a mandatory national energy efficiency program that targets investment and stimulus to increase the energy efficiency of our homes and businesses, create jobs, save consumers money and set the stage for a sustainable economy based on clean and renewable energy.

To take action or learn more, go to

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/campaigns/global-warming-and-energy>