

People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis



**Notes from First Meeting
17 February 2013
Forward on Climate Rally
Washington D.C.**





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Introduction

On January 26, 2013 participants in the rally to oppose the northeastern tar sands pipeline in Portland, Maine considered the question of how to channel the enthusiasm at the end of the rally into action. Leveraging the ideas of environmental democracy, they planned “People’s Assembly on the Climate Crisis”, open to all, to be convened for the first time on February 17, 2013 at what would be known as the Forward on Climate Rally in Washington DC. The first meeting of People’s Assembly on the Climate Crisis was held on that day in Washington DC at Church of the Epiphany 1317 G Street NW.

The agenda for the first meeting was:

1. *Opening Plenary*, including welcome, plans for the meeting, and regional discussions.
2. *Breakout Committee Meetings*, addressing each of the topics listed below.
3. *Concluding Plenary*, including informational, non-binding, non-ratified reports from breakout committee meetings.

The portions of this document labeled “Key Issues” and “Actions” are summaries of the Breakout Committee Reports at the Concluding Plenary. The portions of this document labeled “Context” have been selected by plenary facilitators to introduce the reader to these topics, which were addressed in the Breakout Committee Meetings:

- Climate change and the U.S. military
- Reducing individual carbon foot prints
- Communication and coordination in the climate movement
- Outreach and diversity in the climate movement
- Ending fossil fuel use without nuclear power
- Climate legislation and political accountability
- Direct action and civil disobedience
- Fossil fuel divestment
- U.S. and international climate treaties
- Transition towns
- Tar sands fuel
- Fracking, gas, and coal

For each breakout session, participants are identified. An asterisk is used to identify the facilitator of the breakout session.



The formation of People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis and its first meeting could not have been possible without the generous donations of time and money from the participants, many but not all of whom are acknowledged throughout this report. Facilities and facilitation supplies were financed by the contributions of participants. Logistical and coordination support (but not financial support) of the following organizations is also gratefully acknowledged:

- 350.org – www.350.org
- 350MA – www.350MA.org
- 350ME – www.world.350.org/maine
- Better Future Project – www.betterfutureproject.org
- Boston Climate Research – www.bostonclimateresearch.com
- Climate Action Now – www.climateactionnowma.org
- Occupy Maine - www.occupymaine.com
- Rainforest Action Network – www.ran.org
- Sierra Club - www.sierraclub.org
- Tar Sands Blockade - www.tarsandsblockade.org

Photographs from the First Meeting of People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis are at <http://www.facebook.com/events/418268198254076>.

Further People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis activities are being planned. For more information about next steps for People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis, please contact: Ezra Silk at ezra.silk@gmail.com.

Climate Change and the US Military

Context

The U.S. military is the single largest institutional consumer of oil in the world, and its global operations are a major source of carbon dioxide emissions contributing to global climate change. Estimates are that as of 2004, the U.S. military consumed 144 million barrels of oil a year—or 395,000 barrels per day. Fifty percent of the Pentagon's energy consumption is accounted for by jet fuel—one of the single most carbon polluting fuels in existence. Many of its vehicles consume so much fuel their consumption is measured in gallons burned per minute instead of miles per hour. A report from Oil Change International found that the carbon emissions produced by the military from the war in Iraq alone “equals the emissions from putting 25 million more cars on the road in the U.S. this year... If the war was ranked as a country in terms of emissions, it would emit more carbon dioxide each year than 139 of the world's nations do annually.”¹

¹ Oil Change International, “25 Million New Cars and Counting”, <http://priceofoil.org/2008/03/19/iraq-25-million-new-cars-and-counting/>



Key Issues

- One of the main drivers of the carbon emissions from the U.S. military is the extent of military operations. To pursue the goal of reducing U.S. military emissions, one objective is to reduce the amount of war waged.
- After reducing the amount of war, the next driver to be addressed in reducing US military emissions is the use of “sustainable practices”, including energy and other resource extraction reduction, and attention to “local” (local sourcing of supplies).
- To support the reduction in the amount of war waged, diplomacy and including developing relationships will be increasingly desirable relative to conflict.

Action

Individuals in the breakout group identified these commitments in terms of information gathering and furthering the work

- Documentation of current DOD sustainability realities
- Investigation of additional opportunities

As a further step, a larger working group is envisioned to expand the conversation.

Participants

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Reducing Individual Carbon Foot Prints

Context

America's carbon footprint is expanding. With a growing population and an expanding economy, America's settlement area has been widening, and Americans are driving more, building more, consuming more energy, and emitting more carbon. Rising energy prices, dependence on fossil fuels, and accelerating global climate change make the nation's growth patterns unsustainable. Metropolitan America is poised to play a leadership role in addressing these energy and environmental challenges. However, federal policy actions are needed to achieve the full potential of metropolitan energy and climate solutions. Residential and



commercial buildings account for 39 percent of the carbon emissions in the United States. Transportation accounts for one-third of U.S. emissions, and industry is responsible for 28 percent. An effective climate strategy must focus on reducing carbon emissions from all three sectors. Total U.S. carbon emissions are projected to grow by 16 percent between 2006 and 2030. Consumers are increasingly the driving force of domestic energy consumption and carbon emissions. Residential and commercial buildings and road transportation are expected to dominate energy demand and carbon growth in the future. ²

Key Issues

- Carbon emissions stem from deeply entrenched social behaviors. Change must start in ways that gain social acceptance for “reduced carbon behaviors”. Reducing individual carbon foot prints must start at a place where people can be open to learning and mutual support from others.
- With 13 states and the District of Columbia now offering electricity choice, there is an opportunity for consumer decisions to drive reduction in carbon emissions by choosing electricity generated by wind and other renewable sources.
- People feel challenged by the need to change. We need to instill that we’re not changing who they are, only what they do.
- A whole food, plant based diet, even if adopted one day a week has the potential to reduce emissions and conserve resources overall (see “forks over knives”)
- Consumers do not have enough information or education about the energy consumed in the production of products they buy.
- Gains can be made in changing own actions, errands, unneeded trips, pay attention to reputable groups.

Actions

- Initiate “Be the change” communication campaigns to introduce new behaviors that reduce emissions.

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² Brookings Institute, “Blueprint for American Prosperity: Shrinking the Carbon Footprint of Metropolitan America”, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2008/5/carbon%20footprint%20sarynski/carbonfootprint_brief.PDF



Communication and Coordination in the Climate Movement

Context

Holding a successful assembly constitutes a hallmark of excellence for a society. While many factors contribute to the success of such an ongoing assembly, a key factor is a systematic approach to communication and coordination: (1) making preliminary analyses and assessments; (2) obtaining the agreement of stakeholders; (3) selecting key points of contact; (4) organizing committees; (5) selecting facilitators, facilities, and dates; (6) developing a comprehensive plan; (7) following through and implementing decisions; (8) anticipating and managing contingencies; and (9) supporting ongoing activities. Using a systematic approach simplifies the task and makes it possible to run an assembly.³

Key Issues

- People engage in communication that is convenient relative to their other communication norms, such as
 - facebook group pages (promotion, unofficial means, temp check)
 - Listserv: riseup.net, occupy.net
- People engage more openly when they have confidence in the security of communication – there is growing aversion to security of google and facebook.
- Calls / conference calls are practical for interactive communication, although challenging to schedule and facilitate. Maestro is an effective conference call platform.
- A text alert system such as Celly is useful for teams on the go.
- Barriers to communication: 1) Disconnection, lack of relationships within groups, 2) Some group members have strong relationships and unintentionally communicate in ways that alienate newcomers (this dynamic is more difficult to break down when the primary modes of communication in the group are digital and voice).

Action

- Use communication in **groups** to build relationships (not just share info)
- Schedule one-on-one meetings (virtual, **randomize** them, like speed dating or a virtual party with a prompt question to get conversation started)
- Pay attention to who is traveling & send out info via a real person
- Consider a website that could act as a clearinghouse for information and dialogue related to this issue

³ IEEE Xplore, "Planning and Organizing an Annual Conference",
http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/login.jsp?tp=&arnumber=6448156&url=http%3A%2F%2Fieeexplore.ieee.org%2Fxppls%2Fabs_all.jsp%3Farnumber%3D6448156



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Inclusive Outreach in the Climate Movement

Context

Inclusive outreach refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization and establishing a fundamental assumption of inclusion. That sounds simple, but it encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background and more. Inclusive outreach not only involves how people perceive themselves, but how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions. For a wide assortment of people to function effectively, organizers need to deal effectively with issues such as communication, adaptability and change. Successful organizations recognize the need for pro-active measures to promote inclusive outreach and are willing to spend resources on managing it. When organizations actively assess their inclusive outreach, develop and implement inclusive outreach plans, benefits are reported such as: increased adaptability, broader capabilities, variety of viewpoints, and more effective execution.⁴

Key Issues

- To further grow the climate movement, we need to move past engaging privileged minority and learn how to build community across ethnicity/class lines. This will include restorative justice
 - How do we acknowledge pain?
 - Heal and organize - we need to start being honest, present the facts about oppression and privilege
- Must revisit 'the lay of the environmental justice land' – Connect with more organizations that are already there -- what are they doing? Also, must listen to community leaders and organized people in each community, especially their opinions on climate as a political issues and what they see as intersecting issues
- Need to build bridges with environmental justice groups - gather other frames, push for more environmental justice groups setting agenda on established national climate movement platforms. Also, environmental justice allies need to

⁴ Human Resource Management Review, "Diversity in Organizations: Where are We Now, and Where are We Going?", Successful organizations recognize the need for pro-active measures to promote diversity



be open to operating in a supporting role (including providing resources) without feeling the need to set the agenda

- Need for cultural relativity when building bridges
- For mostly white, privileged climate movement to become allies to marginalized communities will take a willingness to step out of comfort zones
- Bridge building between mostly white, privileged movement and other groups can happen over issues which are important to both groups ('responsible allyship'):
 - Transit justice, food justice, etc.
 - Also needs to be about REAL RELATIONSHIPS! This means a lot of listening from people who are used to talking
- Need to set up non-dominant cultural spaces
- Acknowledge powerful community of tight-knit immigrant communities
- Need a longer talk to flesh out the race/class nuances of outreach
- Need for more humility from predominantly white, privileged groups when reaching out to environmental justice groups (check power dynamics)
- Flexibility with targets and tactics - allow communities to self identify and self define
- Need accessible and relevant frames for disseminating information to community - **need popular education strategy**, with which community members can create accessible/relevant resources for their own outreach goals
- **Story of self - story based strategy** - healing, transformative, powerful. Greater exchange with flow of information - need to share stories of most impacted communities to a broader audience.
- Stop underestimating ability of a popular understanding of issues
- **Do not tokenize!**
- Resource distribution - needs to happen responsibly (acknowledgement of disproportionate burden on communities of color)
- Organizations to inspire: Green for All, Sustainable South Bronx, Center for Third World Organizing, Allied Research Center

Action

- Map out environmental justice organizations, and develop strategy for building sustainable, genuine relationships, respectfully. (Ask what kind of support is needed, do not assume)
- Identify community relevant issues and **be responsible allies to these issues** do not limit communities from giving their all to address environmental racism. Examples of community relevant issues: foreclosure crisis, labor rights, immigrant rights, health equity, food justice. (Only in this way can we expect to build trust and we are misinformed if we think environmental racism can be tackled without addressing the intersections with these issues. To build a mass movement we need to address environmental racism.)
- Coalition building - **Represent, acknowledge, respect**



- bilingual campaigns, information
- Reach out to Spanish language media, whatever language media is unique to community
- Fundraising:
 - Environmental justice groups, work towards independent power and control over their own funding
 - Money does not need to come from compromise
 - There are examples of successful fundraising by being honest, and we need to acknowledge wrong in what is happening now.

Participants

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Ending Fossil Fuel Use without Nuclear Power

Context

The relative costs and benefits of nuclear energy have been the subject of heated debate in recent years thanks to a combination of factors, including the need to cut carbon emissions and the 2011 accident at Fukushima, Japan. Critics argue that nuclear is not only dangerous but also unnecessary for tackling climate change; supporters claim the risks are small and that abandoning nuclear would make an already huge challenge even harder and more expensive.

One thing that's clear is that de-carbonising electric power will be critical for solving climate change. Even assuming big gains in efficiency, the world will need about twice as much electricity in 2050 as it does today. The problem is that, as of today, most of the world's electricity comes from coal (40%) and gas (20%), with hydroelectric (16%) and nuclear (13%) the third and fourth largest sources. In Europe most of the new generating capacity being added today is low-carbon wind. In China, the world's largest energy consumer, most of the new capacity is coal, although it is also the world's largest investor in both wind and nuclear. Worldwide, the majority of new capacity is still coal or gas.⁵

⁵ The Guardian. "Is Nuclear Power Necessary for Solving Climate Change?"
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/dec/21/nuclear-power-necessary-climate-change>



Key Issues

- Nuclear energy is not just toxic, it also has a large carbon footprint.
- Existing nuclear technology is prohibitively toxic no good, but we don't need to rule out future clean nuclear technology.
- Compare drawbacks of nuclear to wind and solar. Nothing is perfect and all human activity has an impact.
- We agree that current nuclear technology is not an answer to climate change (even though the future may hold a clean nuclear technology).

Action Steps

- Ask 350.org and other groups to sign on to our position on nuclear power.
- Ask Obama and Congress to sign on to our position on nuclear power.
- Educate people about clean alternatives to nuclear power.

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Climate Legislation and Political Accountability

Context

As the US faces record losses to extreme weather, American environmental denialism may be starting to change. The question is: is it too late? America has led the world in climate change denial. Year after year, the US has failed to sign global treaties or curb emissions, even as U.S. status as a source of a third of the world's carbon emissions goes unchanged. It is fairly well-known what has been behind that climate change denial in America: vast sums pumped into a government influencing ignorance industry by the oil and gas lobbies. Entire think tanks to obfuscate manmade climate change have been funded by these interests, as have individual congressmen and women. Entirely typical, for instance, is Louisiana Representative John Fleming, whose campaigns, according to blogger John Henry, accept about \$200,000 a year from oil and gas lobbyists, and who uses his social media pages to deny global warming.⁶

⁶ The Guardian, "America's Drought of Political Will on Climate Change", <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/aug/08/america-drought-political-will-climate-change>



Key Issues

- It is important to develop relationships with law makers and their staffs, not just lobby them.
- Some lawmakers are elected by constituents who are mis-informed or willingly deny science.
- Some law makers are influenced by political donations from those who stand to benefit from leaving climate change unchecked.

Actions

- Have 350.org create tool kits for how to build relationships w congress.
- Meetings w congress folks, locally and in DC, especially to support Boxer / Sanders Bill
- Keep in touch with this group to develop ongoing strategy.
- Conduct "Lobby Day - 350"
- Have elected officials sign onto Pingree (ME) letter to state department, opposing tar sands
- Develop relationships with local media
- Have elected officials call / write Obama / Kerry re: Tar sands
- Collaborate with Sierra club & public citizen's groups on lobbying effort
- Hold Obama accountable: 1) one letter from each rally attendee, 2) John Kerry pressure, 3) Send video message to Kerry & Obama this week
- Hold children's crusade
- Establish facebook pages

Participants

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Direct Action and Civil Disobedience

Context

Civil Disobedience is the act of disobeying a law on grounds of moral or political principle. It is an attempt to influence society to accept a dissenting point of view. Although it usually uses tactics of nonviolence, it is more than mere passive



resistance since it often takes active forms such as illegal street demonstrations or peaceful occupations of premises. The classic treatise on this topic is Henry David Thoreau's "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience," which states that when a person's conscience and the laws clash, that person must follow his or her conscience. The stress on personal conscience and on the need to act now rather than to wait for legal change are recurring elements in civil disobedience movements. The U.S. Bill of Rights asserts that the authority of a government is derived from the consent of the governed, and whenever any form of government becomes destructive, it is the right and duty of the people to alter or abolish it.⁷

Key Issues

- Be strategic Goal is media / possible attention
- Prepare to mobilize: Need to communicate and coordinate
- Be accessible
- If Obama approves, Keystone XL, what next?
- Plug into what's happening
- Is it ever more effective to destroy?
(Note: People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis is committed to non-violence)
- How to balance good w bad?
- How to share stories?
- Use singing

Actions

- Support March week of action
- Support education (need for civil disobedience)
- Plan to come back to DC
- Labyrinth
- Decide on next targets – Embassies?

Participants

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⁷ Civil Liberties Monitoring Project, "The Role of Civil Disobedience in Democracy",
<http://www.civilliberties.org/sum98role.html>



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Fossil Fuel Divestment

Context

The evidence from South Africa suggests that divestment, while ineffective in a financial sense, can have an impact by shaping public discourse. If institutions across the country divested from fossil fuels, this would again be the case. Exxon Mobil's sky-high valuation is unlikely to come down any time soon; however, the gesture could help to reignite public debate on climate change and energy security.

Divestment from fossil fuel producers would send a powerful message to the energy industry and the nation. It would signal that Americans take the climate-energy challenge seriously. Adopting an investment strategy that encourages the development of renewable energy and lower-carbon fossil fuels will be an important piece of response to the coming energy challenge.⁸

Key Issues

- Many people and organizations are not yet aware of the concept of fossil fuel divestment (Need to provide awareness and education about what fossil fuel divestment is, what it can accomplish, and what not to expect)
- There is significant divestment activity at colleges and universities, some making progress others hitting obstacles. Many faith-based organizations are exploring divestment, some organizations blazing a trail (United Church of Christ) and some proceeding cautiously, while a few deny human causes of climate change. Governments and pensions are generally not yet considering divestment or at very early stages.
- Divestment is a complex topic, and the organizations we ask to divest are complex organizations. We must invest in education and materials to help address the complexity.

⁸ The Institute of Politics at Harvard, "Does Divestment Work?", <http://www.iop.harvard.edu/does-divestment-work>



- The financial services industry has not yet begun to wake up to the growing demand for fossil fuel free investing. Commitment from the financial services industry to develop this as a market will support the divestment cause.
- In addition to supporting institutional divestment, we all should be exploring individual, personal divestment.
- We can draw parallels to other divestment campaigns that have used moral arguments: South Africa, asbestos, weapons, tobacco.
- Good resources and background: “Fiduciary Responsibility and the Fossil Fuel Crash: Head for the Exit”, Bank of England assessment that fossil fuel assets are subprime, HSBC report on pending decline in fossil fuel shares, United Church of Christ Divestment page, gofossilfree.org, fossilfueldivest.org

Actions

- Share existing resources with participants in the breakout group.
- Establish a divestment campaign team for every major faith based denomination that acknowledges climate change and human causes of climate change.
- Establish divestment campaign teams to target state and municipal organizations (including pensions) for each state where 350.org has a state based organization.

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U.S. and International Climate Treaties

Context

A lack of leadership by the U.S. in the climate treaties puts the survival of millions of people around the globe at risk. In the past five years, the worldwide growth in coal use has caused over two-thirds of the increase in global CO2 emissions, pushing



greenhouse gas emissions to a record high. The World Bank, the CIA and the UNEP have each warned about the consequences of unchecked climate change. Statements by U.S. negotiators that the U.S. is making 'enormous efforts' is contradicted by their lack of leadership in calling for enforceable reductions in CO2 and other greenhouse gases. The U.S. position betrays people who lost their lives during hurricane Sandy. It betrays people who have faced the effects of intense drought in the U.S. It betrays the aspirations of a growing number of young Americans, who want the U.S. to recover from climate denialism that has delayed progress in climate negotiations. This lack of leadership has profoundly disappointed those who were so energized by President Obama's promise of hope and pledges to rejoin the international community. The claim that the U.S. 2020 target of cutting global warming pollution by 17 percent compared to 2005 is based on science, when the world leading climate scientists calls for much higher targets for industrialized countries and a new United Nations Environmental Program study shows not only a lack of leadership, but also a lack of integrity. There is a widening gap between existing commitments and what is required to prevent the worst catastrophic impacts of climate change. U.S. envoys overstate U.S. commitments to finance global climate initiatives while the U.S. Export-Import Bank alone is spending five times more on fossil fuel subsidies that will only hasten catastrophic climate change.

Key Issues

- U.S. citizens need to show up for citizens in other nations (treaties, constitution).
- Treaties have been violated (e.g., Fort Laramie, International Treaty to Protect Sacred Lands (Lakota):
 - Humans/land and an "acceptable risk" approach to treaty integrity.
 - Need to recognize causality links instead of handing out "Doomland Funpass".
- Information flow and access regarding where, why, and how people and groups are rising up.
- Commodification of basic needs and spiritual connections. We need to change thinking to rebalance the relationship between ecology and economy.
- Trans-pacific partnership: "strategic economic partnership" of 11 nations (United States, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia) consulting with 600 companies for corporate governance/nation (similar to ACTA).
- Debt forgiveness.
- Hold parties accountable to treaties.
- Bank of America and other big banks shift energy investments.



Action Steps

- Research / read past and present treaties .
- Get info out regarding Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement.
- Put physical bodies at treaty events and to enforce treaties.
- Upcoming events: 1) March 5-March 13 ReclaimOurEarth.net, 2) July and August Events, 3) December – Global Summit.
- Develop alternative models of people powered strategies to secure our goals. Develop local bills of rights, local infrastructure, local currency.
- Direct democracy lateral.

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Transition Towns

Context

The transition town vision is that every community engages its collective creativity to unleash an extraordinary and historic transition to a future beyond fossil fuels; a future that is more vibrant, abundant and resilient; one that is ultimately preferable to the present.

The transition town movement works as a resource and catalyst for building resilient communities that are able to withstand severe energy, climate or economic shocks while creating a better quality of life in the process. The movement works to fulfill its mission by inspiring, encouraging, supporting, networking and training individuals and their communities as they consider, adopt, adapt, and implement the Transition approach to community empowerment and change.

The Transition approach is based on four key assumptions:

- That life with dramatically lower energy consumption is inevitable, and that it's better to plan for it than to be taken by surprise.
- That our communities currently lack resilience.



- That we have to act collectively, and we have to act now to build community resilience and prepare for life without fossil fuels.
- That by unleashing the collective genius of our communities it is possible to design new ways of living that are more nourishing, fulfilling and ecologically sustainable.⁹

Key Issues

- Climate change and peak oil demand creativity, innovation, and change to manage *material* economic decline
- To accomplish the transition, we need to: “unleash”, “generate a buzz”, and “build resilient communities”, “political action”
- Consider these practices as part of transition:
 - Grassoline (agro fuels)
 - Food security -> entrepreneurial solutions
 - Urban Agro-business and yard shares
 - Cooperative power companies
 - Self **organizing** systems
 - “Buy-one give-one” engineering and design
 - Tool libraries
 - Alternative currency
 - Farmers market
 - “Well being” index as an alternative to GDP

Actions

- Awareness building events
- Engaging people
- Release created energy of town
- Training for transition

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⁹ Transition United States, “Our Story”, <http://transitionus.org/our-story>



Tar Sands Fuel

Context

Tar sands oil is one of the dirtiest fossil fuels on the planet, causing massive environmental impacts across a widening expanse of western Canada. The sprawling tar sands operations in Alberta are one of the most environmentally destructive energy projects in the world, destroying boreal forests that provide crucial habitat for endangered woodland caribou and breeding grounds for millions of birds. The boreal forest stores 11% of the world's carbon and is our first line of defense against global warming.

In addition to wide scale habitat destruction, the tar sands operation generates large volumes of air and water pollution. Tar sands oil is one of the most carbon intensive form of energy—substituting it for conventional oil increases global warming emissions by 20%, when of course we need to reduce emissions by 20% or more in the near future. Massive toxic waste water ponds from tar sands operations—akin to mountain top coal mining—can be seen from space. Furthermore, tar sands pipelines have experienced hundreds of ruptures over the past decade, spilling more than one million gallons of oil that has polluted rivers, wetlands, and threatened wildlife.¹⁰

Key Issues

- The tar sands issue, as with many other environmental issues, brings together people from all walks of life and all motivations.
 - The extraction and transport of tar sands is done without the consent of the tribes and indigenous peoples where extraction occurs, contradicting Article 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and is therefore unlawful.
 - Tar sands dilbit (diluted bitumen) is especially dangerous if spilled since it is pumped with a cocktail of undisclosed toxic and carcinogenic chemicals. Because of this along with the use and abuse of eminent domain by tar sands pipeline companies, landowners living along the path of the pipeline have come out against it.
 - Tar sands transport through pipelines, in particular Keystone, puts water sources, in particular the Ogallala and Corrizo-Wilcox aquifers, at risk for millions of people. This is especially dangerous at this time of nationwide drought.

¹⁰ Natural Resources Council of Maine, "Dirty Fuels: Tar Sands Oil",
<http://www.nrcm.org/tarsands.asp>



- Tar sands refining further compromises communities that live near refineries, communities which are already victims of marginalization via environmental racism.
- Tar sands is one of the most destructive forms of fuel on the planet. The complete exploitation of the Athabasca oil sands in Canada would lead to catastrophic and irreversible climate change, thus everyone on the planet has stake in this issue.
- Myths used to support Keystone XL:
 - *KXL is a job creator*: Keystone XL is touted as a job creator but most jobs are short-term construction jobs that would last for only a few months, and the rest are long-term jobs of which there may be as few as 20.
 - *Tar sands will be produced one way or the other*: this argument does not take into consideration the rising tide against fossil fuel exploitation. Indeed stopping KXL would be a significant milestone in halting other future efforts to exploit tar sands.
 - *KXL would be the safest pipeline ever built*: this claim comes from a company which said Keystone 1 would leak once every 7 to 10 years but which leaked 12 times in its first 12 months. Furthermore, on December 3 2012, activists from the Tar Sands Blockade gathered photographic evidence of pipeline welds so flawed that light shined through them. This pipeline is being built with negligence that can only be described as criminal.
 - *KXL leads to energy independence for the US*: KXL actually leads to Houston and Port Arthur, Texas which happen to be free trade zones. Tar sands fuel from KXL is meant predominantly for the global market.
 - *KXL will reduce gas prices*: unless the southern segment of KXL is built, tar sands fuel will stay bottlenecked in the Midwest and Great Plains region of the US, which reduces gas prices there. If KXL is completed, this bottleneck would be relieved, allowing companies to both sell tar sands fuel to international markets and to get more money for it, thus domestic prices would go up.
- Current and proposed tar sands expansion projects:
 - Keystone 1
 - Keystone XL (Gulf Coast & Northern segments)
 - Enbridge Energy pipeline (infamous for the Kalamazoo 2010 spill)
 - Enbridge/ExxonMobil's Trailbreaker/Line 9
 - Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline
 - Tar sands extraction based in Utah
 - many more proposed projects that we didn't list
- Resistance groups/networks forming to address expansion projects:
 - Tar Sands Blockade
 - Great Plains Tar Sands Resistance
 - Tar Sands Free Northeast
 - Anti-fracking and anti-tar sands communities in Michigan



- Peaceful Uprising and Utah Tar Sands Resistance
- Idle No More
- First Nations
- Indigenous Environmental Network

Actions

- *Direct action:* many groups are implementing direct action/civil disobedience as a strategy, but more work needs to be done to normalize direct action, to get 350.org & Sierra club more involved with it.
- *Legal battles:* work is being done to challenge TransCanada and other tar sands companies on a legal basis. Indigenous peoples are challenging violations of their sovereignty, and landowners are working on suing TransCanada for fraud and for post-construction land damages.
- *Culture shift through media:* articles, reports, blogs, tweets, memes and videos are all helping to shape the media and cultural landscape, and thus public perception about KXL and tar sands
- *Upcoming events:*
 - Tar Sands Blockade is calling for a nation-wide Week of Action to Stop Tar Sands Profiteers, March 16-23rd. For more info see www.tarsandsblockade.org/weekofaction
 - Great Plains Tar Sands Resistance is holding a training camp in Oklahoma, March 18-22nd. For more info see gptarsandsresistance.org/direct-action-training-camp-in-Oklahoma

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Fracking, Gas, and Coal

Context

The use of fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – continues to increase, pushing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to record levels. Fracking in the US as well as “massive coal expansion” in Australia, China and Indonesia, Canadian tar sands and Caspian Sea gas would increase CO₂ emissions by six gigatonnes. Modelling by Ecofys for a Greenpeace report, *The Point of No Return*, found that the yearly emissions from these projects “will be higher than the total US emissions and will lock in catastrophic global warming”. If they all went ahead as planned, there would be no chance of limiting global warming to 2 degrees. Coal, the most damaging fossil fuel



in terms of emissions, “will come close to surpassing oil as the world’s top energy source”, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). It expects the production of coal to increase in every region of the world apart from the US, where it is “being pushed out by natural gas” from fracking. Coal’s share of global primary energy reached 28 per cent in 2011 – its highest point on record. The IEA expects that China will surpass the rest of the world in coal demand during the same period, while India will become the second-largest consumer, outpacing the US, where coal exports are growing at a rate not seen since 1981.¹¹

Key Issues

- Economics:
 - Support Boxer-Sanders Bill
 - Divestment
- Education:
 - A central hub for information sharing between various resources (e.g. Clean Water Action, 350.org, NRDC (good graphics), Sane Energy (NYC), Food and Water Watch)
- Regulation:
 - Petition to support the Boxer-Sanders Bill
 - Target on each state PUC

Actions

- Public Education: improve information sharing across states (e.g. fracking situation by states, research reports from organizations)
- Support local producers
- Monitoring local bans/ordinances (e.g. Oklahoma Fracking Monitor)
- Direct utilities away from gas toward renewables → Public Utilities Commission
- Divestment (check out dirtymoney.org)
- Demand full disclosures of fracking chemicals
- Repeal 2005 Energy Act → Support Boxer Sanders Bill
- Regulation on mountain top removal and valley fill
- Contact elected officials

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¹¹ Irish Times, “Fracking and Coal Change Global Equation”,
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2013/0219/1224330204568.html>



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Conclusion

Environmental democracy is a necessary part of transition to a post-carbon society. People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis is grounded in democracy, inviting all people to participate in a movement committed to a transformation that frees society from dependence on fossil fuels.

At its first meeting, People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis has provided a voice to those who otherwise would not be heard. The meeting has revealed a valuable new perspective, reflected in a unique combination of insights. Based on those insights, the first meeting has identified issues and actions to channel coordinated effort to confront climate change.

A next meeting is envisioned to coincide with upcoming major regional and national climate protests.

This document and photographic records of the first meeting of People's Assembly on the Climate Crisis have been compiled by the facilitators, with coordination provided by Boston Climate Research.