

# CLIMATE HAWKS



**To:** Climate Hawks  
**Subject:** Your Negotiating Goals in “World Energy”

Welcome to the global climate and energy policy conference. As leaders of the growing movement for climate action, you are working tirelessly to push for the strongest possible actions and policies to address climate change.

Your group includes international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) primarily based in countries that are major contributors of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (U.S. and the E.U.), but that work worldwide, including in developing nations who contribute the least to climate change but will suffer the worst consequences from it. Your group includes leaders from organizations such as:

- Established environmental organizations that have thousands of members and a long history of work on environmental issues.
- Student and youth-led efforts that are holding rallies at schools and in offices of elected officials to call attention to the impacts of climate change.
- Grassroots climate justice organizations, many from low-lying nations, that are experiencing climate impacts already and who emphasize that their survival is dependent on limiting global warming to 1.5 °C above preindustrial levels.

As Climate Hawks, you do not have the power to implement policies or make large financial investments that control the energy infrastructure of the global economy. However, unlike the other groups, you are not beholden to vested interests and are free to advocate for policies and actions that could break gridlock and move society to swiftly and effectively address climate change.

Your goal is to promote the strongest possible agreement to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, starting immediately. Do your best in the time allotted.

As a group, you will:

1. **Advocate for or against** the *Carbon Pricing* group setting a price on carbon emissions and where the revenue will go.
2. **Lobby and negotiate with** the other parties to encourage them to take actions that contribute to solving the climate change problem while improving the welfare of the people and groups you represent.

The best available science shows: that GHGs emitted by human activity are already changing the climate, that the risks of further climate change to human welfare are serious, and that avoiding the worst impacts is possible. Some in your group have already seen these impacts firsthand. The internationally agreed upon goal is to limit the global average temperature to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels. Warming above this level threatens the economy and human welfare of all nations. Despite the resistance you might meet, you know that taking action is the only path forward.

The climate action movement is growing. The scientific consensus is clear: over 97% of climate scientists agree that climate change is happening now, that it is caused by human activities, and that its impacts could be devastating. The window of opportunity for action is rapidly closing, and without action, the poor, today's young people, and future generations will suffer disproportionately. As climate change impacts intensify, the political will to pass meaningful climate policy is likely to grow. Fortunately, a majority of the public already believes climate change is real and that human activities contribute significantly to it.<sup>1</sup> Most support some

level of action to limit climate change. In addition, taking action to reduce fossil fuel use and transition to clean energy sources would bring numerous health and social benefits unrelated to climate change, including improved air quality and cardiovascular health, higher rates of physical activity and fitness, greener cities, better energy and food security, and new jobs. The sooner we start the cheaper and less disruptive it will be.

However, although there is strong potential for change, climate change still ranks near the bottom of most people's priorities, far below the economy, jobs, and fears of terrorism or civil unrest. Many governments have been captured by the fossil fuel industry and other vested interests. These interests have also been successful in confusing the public by using the strategy of the tobacco industry: casting doubt on the science. They have carried out a concerted public relations and media campaign to suggest that scientists disagree, that we don't know enough, and that the risks are exaggerated. Due in part to their efforts, many people also underestimate public acceptance of human-caused climate change, making those who believe human-caused climate change is occurring less likely to openly discuss it with others. Your challenge is to shift the conversation from uncertainty, silence, and the status quo towards meaningful action, as soon as possible.

While radical change could be difficult, there are some positive trends pointing toward growing political support for climate action:

- 90% of European Union citizens view climate change as a serious problem; 80% recognize that addressing climate change and improving energy efficiency can boost the economy and employment.
- The climate action movement is growing and has made some impressive gains. For example, on a single international day of action in 2009, 350.org coordinated over 5,200 synchronized demonstrations in 181 countries and in September 2014, more than 400,000 people marched for climate action. The tools of social media, with their global reach and capacity for information sharing, are well suited to a movement addressing a global problem that will disproportionately affect the younger generation.

Notes on actions:

**1. Take a position for a strong carbon price.** Economists agree that internalizing the environmental and social costs of GHG emissions with a carbon price could be the best way to reduce global GHG emissions. You want a high carbon price (well over \$50 per ton) to swiftly address climate change. However, a price on carbon would increase the cost of fossil fuels which could be passed on to energy customers. To avoid raising energy costs for people the revenue generated could go back to the public or to programs that benefit them. The revenue could also go to compensate fossil fuel companies for their losses or to decrease the deficit. If the revenue is returned to the public as a dividend or tax cut, an estimated 66% of Americans would get back as much or more than they pay in increased fossil fuel costs.

**2. Lobby the other groups for strong action.** Unlike you, other groups can implement policies and make decisions that could move society to swiftly reduce emissions. Encourage strong action from others. Push the *Conventional Energy Supply* group to eliminate current subsidies for, and tax, fossil fuels, and to cut methane leakage from natural gas production and distribution. Push the *Renewable Energy Supply* group to subsidize renewables. Push the *Energy Efficiency* group for stronger policies to speed the rate of energy efficiency improvements for stationary sources, like buildings and equipment, and for mobile sources, like trucks and trains. Energy efficiency projects can reduce reliance on fossil fuels and often have short payback periods and net cost savings in the long run. Many experts believe that it is possible to improve overall energy efficiency at a rate of 3.5% per year, with modest up-front costs and large ongoing savings. The *Land and Agriculture* group can promote policies that reduce emissions of methane and nitrous oxide, two potent GHGs.

You don't have much clout compared to the lobbyists for the fossil fuel industry and status quo. Use whatever tactics you feel are appropriate. Take the moral high ground. Consider peaceful demonstrations and nonviolent resistance.

US\$/ton CO <sub>2</sub>	Examples of existing carbon prices
139	Swedish carbon tax
101	Swiss carbon tax
77	Finland carbon tax
64	Norway carbon tax (upper)
55	France carbon tax
36	Iceland carbon tax
29	Denmark carbon tax (fossil fuels)
27	BC carbon tax
25	UK carbon price floor
23	Alberta carbon tax
21	Slovenia carbon tax, Korea ETS
16	EU ETS
15	California CaT, Ontario, Quebec
9	Beijing pilot ETS
8	Portugal carbon tax, Swiss ETS
7	Shenzhen pilot ETS
6	Shanghai pilot ETS, Tokyo CaT, Colombia, Latvia
4	GGGI, Chongqing pilot ETS
3	Mexican carbon tax (upper)
1	Tianjin pilot ETS
<1	Poland carbon tax

World Bank, Ecofys (2018). *State and Trends of Carbon Pricing*

Good luck. The future depends on your success.