

Experts across the world agree that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions are leading to global climate change. Left unchecked, global warming could lead to extreme weather events, an increase in tropical disease infections, severe economic disruptions and many other significant problems.

It is our responsibility to our children to leave the world a better place than we found it, and I believe that we must take strong actions to address the threat of global warming. The future of our planet depends on our ability to become more environmentally conscious.

### **Addressing the threat of Global Warming**

An important part of the solution is educating people about the risks of global warming and what we can all do to reduce our impact. Earlier this year I introduced legislation to promote global warming education in our nation, and last month I held a forum in our District focused on Green Living.

### **Silicon Valley is Leading the Fight**

On August 30th, I hosted a spirited panel discussion on how we can each make educated decisions about the energy we use. I was joined by representatives from local organizations who are helping to develop innovative ways to address the threat of climate change. The forum was held at the West Valley Branch Library in San Jose, which holds the distinction of being San Jose's first LEED Certified Green Building and is the first LEED Certified public library in the nation.

### **Take a look at what the panelists presented:**

#### **A Strategy of Sustainability**

Dr. Sally Benson ( [Stanford University Global Climate and Energy Project](#) ) discussed the carbon cycle as it relates to projected population growth and an increase in emissions as more

of the world population becomes industrialized. She then outlined a five part strategy of sustainability, which included: Efficiency, Conservation, Renewable Energy, Carbon Sequestration, and Understanding the Life Cycle of Alternative Energy options.

(read more: [PDF](#) | [PPT](#) )

### Reducing Your Carbon Footprint

Dr. Julio Magalhaes ( [Global Warming Programs, Sierra Club – Loma Prieta Chapter](#) ) discussed both direct and indirect actions anyone can take to reduce their carbon footprint. Direct actions include minimizing car trips, insulating ones home, and considering the carbon footprint of products before making purchases. Indirect actions include joining a climate action team, funding carbon offset programs, and promoting programs such as the Cool Cities Campaign.

(read more: [PDF](#) | [PPT](#) )

### Today's Solar Home

Agustin Fonts ( [Santa Clara University Solar Decathlon Team](#) ) described the collaboration of local college students as they produced a solar-power house as an entry in the [Solar Decathlon competition](#) . Some of the materials that were used to build the home are commercially available, such as: bamboo I-beams, electro-chromatic windows, solar A/C, reclaimed wood, non-toxic foam, and recycled denim insulation.

(read more: [PDF](#) | [PPT](#) )

### Energy Efficiency and Conservation

Darren Deffner ( [Pacific Gas & Electric](#) ) described how PG&E, an energy provider, is committed to energy efficiency and conservation. PG&E uses a mix of renewable and carbon-free energy sources and has just started the [ClimateSmart program](#), which is a carbon offset investment program for PG&E customers.

(read more: [PDF](#) | [PPT](#) )

### Affordable Green Living

Jeff Oberdorfer ( [First Community Housing](#) ) described First Community Housing's commitment to providing affordable green-living in the Bay Area. Their housing makes use of recycled tiled carpet, non-formaldehyde and non-toxic paint, and photovoltaic cells on larger buildings and carport strips. FCH also builds next to mass transit and provides an Ecopass (VTA light rail and bus) to each tenant to discourage driving.

(read more: [PDF](#) | [PPT](#) )

### Three Ways to Green Your Home

Dr. Max Sherman ( [Lawrence Berkeley National Lab](#) ) put the American Carbon footprint in perspective: the average American produces 5 times the amount of emissions as the average global citizen, the average Californian is slightly better at 3 times higher than the average global citizen. Dr. Sherman discussed how individuals can green their homes in three ways: Low-Cost/no-cost changes, behavioral changes, and energy investments. Techniques for improving indoor air quality make for a home that is more energy efficient as well as healthier to live in.

(read more: [PDF](#) | [PPT](#) )

## Clean & Green Energy Action Plan

Carl Guardino ( [Silicon Valley Leadership Group](#) ) discussed the Leadership Group's Clean and Green Energy Action Plan and the variety of programs the Leadership Group is involved in to address global warming and climate change. Carl pointed out that 51% of carbon emissions in the Bay Area come from transportation, and encouraged everyone in the audience to take action in their own lives to reduce their carbon emissions. The theme of the Leadership Group's annual Projections conference on September 26

th

will be "Clean & Green."

(read more: [PDF](#) | [PPT](#) )

I encourage you to take a moment and educate yourself on this important topic. Climate change is a global issue, but all of us can make a difference. Take action today!