

## Fact Sheet: Climate Change

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said, three things are of equal importance: earth, humans, and rain. Rabbi Levi ben Hiyata said: ... to teach that without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, the earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist. (Genesis Rabbah, 13:3)

When God created the first human, God took him and showed him all the trees of the Garden of Eden, and said to him: "See my creations, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are, and all that I have created, I created for you. Be mindful not to ruin and destroy my world, for if you ruin it, there is nobody to fix it after you. (Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:19)

- Since the Industrial Revolution, atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide have increased by more than 30% to levels unsurpassed in the past 800,000 years.
- In the last century, the earth warmed by 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Based on current trends, greenhouse gas emissions may raise temperatures an additional 2.5-12 degrees in this century.
- According to NASA's predictions, 2010 will set a new record high for 12-month global temperatures.
- The World Health Organization estimates that 160,000 people die each year worldwide from the effects of global warming (i.e. heat stroke, increased diseases from insects that thrive in hotter climates, malnutrition from crop destruction). This number could double by 2020.
- As a direct result of climate change, 25% of all plant and animal species could face extinction by 2050.
- The effects of climate change, such as droughts, flooding, and natural disasters, could force as many as 150 million people to migrate from their homes, becoming climate refugees.
- Energy use in Canada increased 28% from 1990 to 2007, though population grew only 19%. The industrial sector uses more energy than any other sector of the Canadian economy, but growth in energy use in the transportation sector is growing faster than any other economic sector.
- According to the Energy Information Administration, the U.S. consumes nearly 20 million barrels of oil each day, which is more than 25% of total global oil consumption.
- Though the U.S. gets less than 4% of its electricity from renewables (in 2008), the renewable energy sector is growing rapidly and has the potential to meet a much greater portion of our energy needs. According to industry experts, the U.S. could get 20% of its electricity from wind power alone.

Check out the website of the Religious Action Center to learn more about the Reform Jewish efforts to stop climate change: <http://rac.org/advocacy/issues/issueenv/>.

Sources: [www.fightglobalwarming.com](http://www.fightglobalwarming.com); [www.climateregistry.org](http://www.climateregistry.org); [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org); [www.ejfoundation.org](http://www.ejfoundation.org)