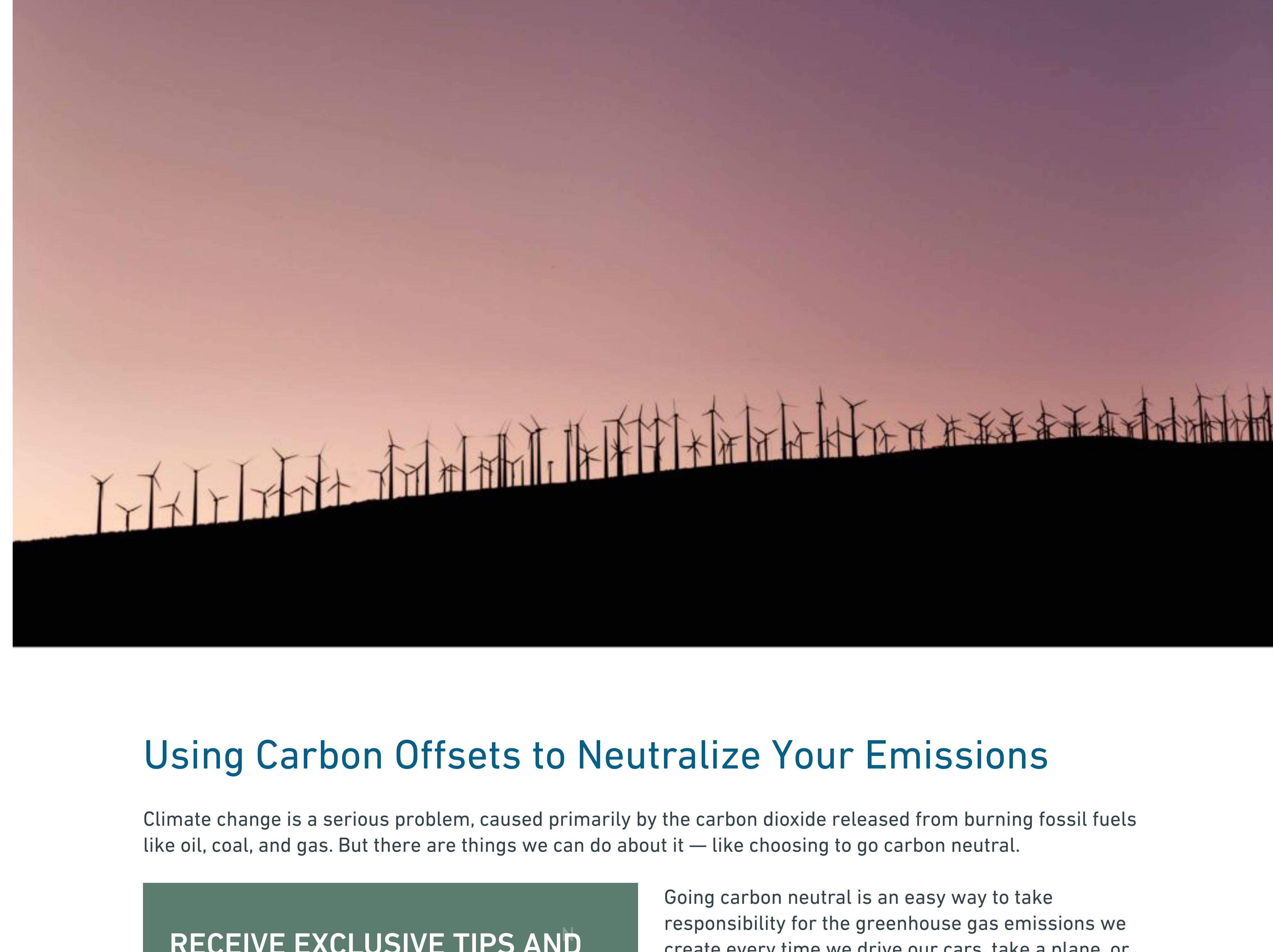


What you can do > Climate change basics > Go carbon neutral

Go carbon neutral



Using Carbon Offsets to Neutralize Your Emissions

Climate change is a serious problem, caused primarily by the carbon dioxide released from burning fossil fuels like oil, coal, and gas. But there are things we can do about it — like choosing to go carbon neutral.

RECEIVE EXCLUSIVE TIPS AND TOOLS

Enter email



Going carbon neutral is an easy way to take responsibility for the greenhouse gas emissions we create every time we drive our cars, take a plane, or turn on our computers. It's based on the principle that, since climate change is a global problem, an emission reduction made elsewhere has the same positive effect as one made locally.

Here's how it works: if you add polluting emissions to the atmosphere, you can effectively subtract them by purchasing carbon offsets. Carbon offsets are simply

credits for emission reductions achieved by projects such as wind farms, solar installations, or energy efficiency retrofits. You can purchase these credits and apply them to your own emissions to reduce your net climate impact.

Why Go Carbon Neutral?

To solve the problem of climate change, we all need to take account of our personal carbon emissions and make continued efforts to reduce them ourselves. But it is impossible to reduce our carbon emissions to zero, no matter how hard we try. Going carbon neutral by purchasing carbon offsets is a practical and affordable way to do something about those remaining emissions.

In addition, by voluntarily calculating and assigning a cost to your carbon emissions, you can begin to prepare for the inevitability of an economy in which carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are regulated and taxed. Whether you are a business or an individual, this is an important step towards managing your carbon emissions efficiently and identifying potential for reductions and savings.

Purchasing high quality carbon offsets from projects such as wind farms also helps support the transition to a sustainable energy economy by providing an additional source of revenue to developers of renewable energy.

While voluntary offset programs should not be seen as a substitute for comprehensive government regulations to reduce greenhouse gases, they are a step in the right direction, and an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on climate change.

Carbon offsets also offer flexibility, as you can choose to offset just one—or all—of your major emission sources. For example, you can purchase carbon offsets to mitigate the emissions from your air travel, automobile use, or home heating. If you wish to offset the emissions from electricity, you can use either carbon offsets or a special product known as a Renewable Energy Certificate (REC), which is like purchasing renewable energy.

Who's Doing It?

Many people and organizations are going carbon neutral (sometimes referred to as 'climate neutral'). Here are just a few examples:

- Major sporting events such as the World Cup Soccer are going carbon neutral, as are many athletes
- Airlines and travel agents are starting to offer customers the option to offset their flights, and some airlines are offsetting all of their flights. Many hotels are also providing carbon neutral accommodations
- Movie studios have offset the emissions from the production of feature films and documentaries, and media companies such as BSkyB, MTV, and News Corp are offsetting the emissions associated with their broadcasts
- Major conferences (e.g. United Nations World Climate Research Programme) and conventions have offset their emissions
- Organizations as diverse as Wells Fargo, Whole Foods, the EPA and the city of Vail, CO have purchased large quantities of renewable energy certificates to offset their electricity use
- Businesses like HSBC, Swiss Re, Google, Nike, Dell, and Vancity have committed to making their entire operations carbon neutral. Other companies are offering carbon neutral products or services, such as carpeting, coffee, and deliveries
- Some utilities are offsetting their emissions and allowing their customers to purchase carbon neutral energy
- Some countries such as Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, and Costa Rica are aiming to be entirely carbon neutral
- The World Bank has committed to being carbon neutral
- Schools and churches are voluntarily offsetting their emissions
- Rock bands like the Rolling Stones, Coldplay, and Dave Matthews Band have offset the emissions associated with their concerts and albums
- Many people are now offsetting their weddings (including air travel by guests)

The list continues to grow — best-selling books, grocery store chains, cities, and even countries are becoming carbon neutral. Many celebrities are also choosing to go carbon neutral in their personal lives to help raise awareness about climate change.

ASK THE PRIME MINISTER TO SUPPORT RENEWABLE ENERGY NOW

JOIN US ON SOCIAL!

Learn more about climate change and discover ways to take action



VIEW MORE →

JOIN OUR EMAIL COMMUNITY

Enter email

