

## COMMUNITIES: WHERE WE CAN LIVE OUR BEST LIVES

Our communities are wellsprings of pride, security, and vitality. We've built them to be strong, prosperous, and livable so we can live our best lives. Climate change is challenging our essential built, social, and natural systems, and increasingly impacts are visible from our kitchen windows. But communities are promising places for progress on climate solutions, because the greatest potential for leadership and innovation is at the local level. You can make a difference in your community. The following talking points provide a starting point. Tailor and use them in your conversations, speeches, and writing to build support for climate solutions.

1. ***I care about climate change because I care about our community and everyone in it.*** I do my part to make our community a better place to live.
2. ***Climate change is already affecting our community.*** Severe weather events, droughts, health impacts, and increased energy bills threaten our community. *(This statement can be specifically tailored to climate impacts seen locally.)*
3. ***Some groups in our city are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including children, the elderly, the sick and poor, and disadvantaged communities.*** Our efforts to stop climate-related pollution help all of these groups – and all of us – live better, healthier lives, now and for years to come.
4. ***We can ensure our families and future generations live in a thriving, healthy community where the air is clean and the water is safe.*** If we act now, we can provide them with the opportunity to live their best lives and prosper.
5. ***Investing in climate solutions means investing in our community.*** We can prepare for climate impacts, enhance our community, create good local jobs, and make our neighborhoods more attractive places to live in for generations to come. By cutting energy costs we can recycle the savings into our communities.
6. ***The greatest action on climate begins with us.*** We have the power to strengthen our environment, health, economy, and community at the same time.
7. ***Of all the things we'd love to leave our children and future generations, a healthy place for them to raise children of their own may be the most important.***

## COUNTERPOINTS

Following are the current main arguments against shifting to clean energy or addressing climate change, along with suggested responses.

1. Climate change does not affect me.

*Response: Climate change affects us all. Changing temperatures make heating and cooling our homes more expensive, and they make a bigger dent in our budgets. Rising sea levels threaten our coastlines. Severe weather events pose a risk to our homes, our community's infrastructure, and our transportation and energy systems. Changing climate patterns affect our health in many ways, including increasing respiratory problems, such as asthma and the severity of allergies. (This statement can be specifically tailored to climate impacts seen locally.) Of all the things we'd love to leave our children and future generations, a healthy place for them to raise children of their own may be the most important.*

2. There is nothing I can do to stop climate change.

*Response: Taking action on climate is something that we can all do together. No one expects any one person to solve this—it is a community problem that requires a collective, community-wide response. In our communities, we can push for clean energy, such as wind and solar power. We can implement energy-efficiency standards, enhance mass transit systems, reduce waste, and optimize water use. We can even make landscaping choices to help reverse the damage to the climate. We can all act at home. Walking to work, changing thermostat settings, recycling, and being conscious about reducing energy consumption and emissions can go a long way. Together and as individuals, we can make a significant difference and be a part of the solution.*

3. I am more concerned about my (family, health, job) right now.

*Response: We all have multiple pressing concerns that compete for our attention. Family, health, and work are all reasons why we must be concerned about a changing climate. We must address climate change because we care about clean air, clean water, and safe communities to live in. Caring for our climate is caring for ourselves, our family, our community, and future generations of residents.*

4. Why should we lead when other (cities, states, countries) are not?

*Response: The United States has always been a yes-we-can kind of place. We have skilled workers, cutting-edge innovators, and an unparalleled work ethic. Other cities and countries are already investing in clean technologies, but we can and must lead the way. The next gold standard will be clean energy—affordable, local wind and solar power made here in our communities. In fact, cities and states across the nation—from California to Texas, Iowa, Tennessee, and beyond—have significantly increased their clean-power production. The United States has more than doubled its supply of solar energy. Our country has solved great challenges before, and we can lead again with innovations that fuel cleaner, safer, and healthier communities for our families, as well as stable, well-paying jobs for us all.*

5. How do we know that humans are causing climate change?

*Response: Although some Americans are unsure about the extent to which the climate is changing, and others doubt how much humans are to blame, we can all agree that we can do something to make our community stronger and more prosperous. Solutions are available right here, right now, and they strengthen our community, create jobs, and help reduce our climate impact at the same time. Investments in wind and solar energy, mass transit, and building efficiency can create jobs, improve living conditions for our families, and boost our economy. Humans may or may not be the sole cause of changes to our climate, but we can certainly be the solution.*