



# ***Guiding Principles and Critical Insights for Effective Climate Communication***

Local Government Commission --  
Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative  
• December 03, 2014

Dan Barry – Communities Director  
Caroline Hodge – Research Manager

ecoAmerica  
*start with people*

# TODAY'S AGENDA

- Introduction
- **Research Presentation:** American Climate Values 2014
- **Putting Research Into Practice:** 13 Steps for Communicating on Climate
- **Practical Application** – A Sample Speech
- Q & A

# MOMENTUS

*Empowering Individual and Institutional Leadership on Climate*



ecoAmerica is a non-profit that uses consumer research and strategic partnerships to create large-scale engagement programs that build awareness, understanding and action for climate & sustainability solutions among mainstream Americans.



MomentUs is a strategic organizing initiative designed to build a critical mass of institutional leadership, public support, political will and collective action for climate solutions in the United States.

MomentUs will develop and support a network of trusted leaders and institutions who will lead by example and engage their stakeholders to do the same, leading to a shift in society that will put America on an irrefutable path to a clean energy, ultimately leading toward a more sustainable and just future.





# MomentUs Leadership *(more than 150 and counting)*



DR. NORMAN ANDERSON, CEO  
American Psychological Association



REV. DR. SHARON WATKINS, General Minister  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



DR. ANTONIO FLORES, President and CEO  
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities



DR. HELENE GAYLE, President  
CARE USA



IMAM MOHAMED MAGID, President  
Islamic Society of North America



HON. GREG NICKELS, 51<sup>st</sup> Mayor  
City of Seattle



REV. GABRIEL SALGUERO, President  
National Latino Evangelical Coalition



DR. REGINA BENJAMIN, 18<sup>th</sup> U.S. Surgeon General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



DR. WALTER BUMPHUS, President and CEO  
American Association of Community Colleges



BISHOP VASHTI MCKENZIE, Senior Bishop  
African Methodist Episcopal Church



DR. JO ANN GORA, President  
Ball State University



DR. JANE LUBCHENCO, 10<sup>th</sup> Administrator  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration



HON. GAVIN NEWSOM, Lieutenant Governor  
State of California

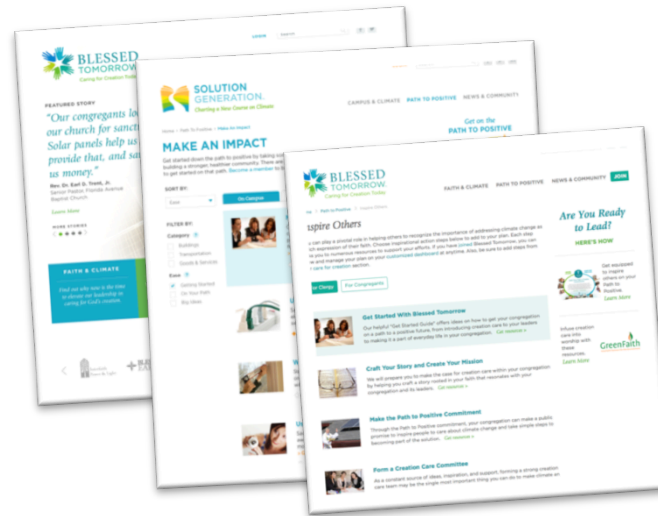


DR. GEORGES BENJAMIN, Executive Director  
American Public Health Association

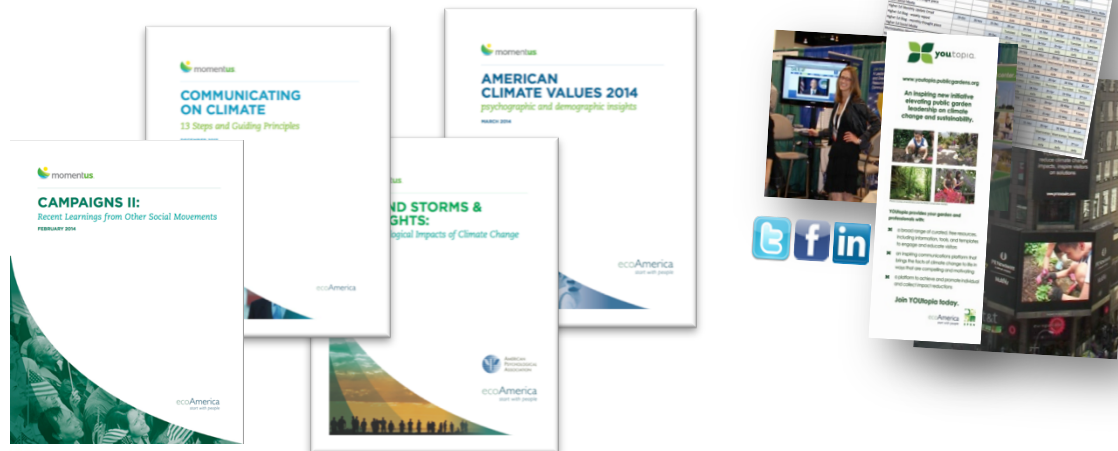
# Partners



# Brands, Research, Resources, Outreach



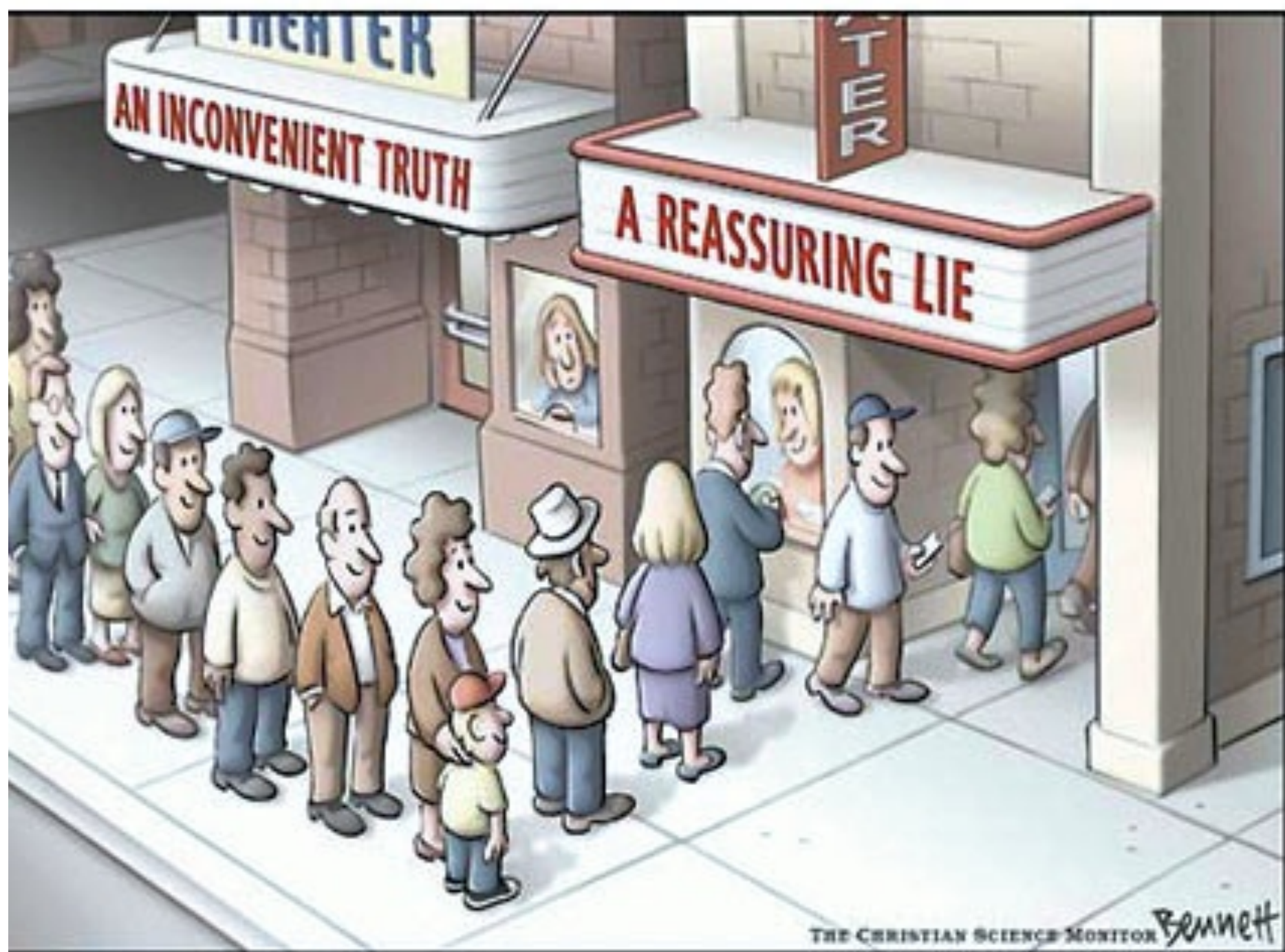
PATH TO  
POSITIVE



- *lead by example*
- *engage others*
- *institutional leadership*
- *collective impact*

ecoAmerica  
*start with people*





THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR *Bennett*

# Making Climate Relevant

## Top Policy Priorities: Economy, Jobs, Terrorism

*% rating each a top priority for the president and Congress each year ...*

	Jan 09 %	Jan 13 %	Jan 14 %	13-14 change
Strengthening the nation's economy	85	86	80	-6
Improving the job situation	82	79	74	-5
Defending country from terrorism	76	71	73	+2
Improving the educational system	61	70	69	-1
Making Social Security system sound	63	70	66	-4
Reducing the budget deficit	53	72	63	-9
Making Medicare system sound	60	65	61	-4
Reducing health care costs	59	63	59	-4
Reforming the nation's tax system	-	52	55	+3
Reducing crime	46	55	55	0
Dealing with problems of poor & needy	50	57	49	-8
Protecting the environment	41	52	49	-3
Dealing with nation's energy problem	60	45	45	0
Strengthening the U.S. military	44	41	43	+2
Reducing the influence of lobbyists	36	44	42	-2
Dealing with illegal immigration	41	39	41	+2
Dealing with moral breakdown	45	40	39	-1
Improving roads, bridges, public transit	-	30	39	+9
Dealing with global warming	30	28	29	+1
Dealing with global trade issues	31	31	28	-3



We are not connecting with Americans.



# RESEARCH PRESENTATION

*13 Steps and Guiding Principles*

# What Resonates With 75% of Americans?

## Exceptionalism, compassion

- We can all make small steps to make the world better (94%)
- People can be the solution (90%)
- Compassion for those who are suffering (86%)

## Personal rights to clean environment for all

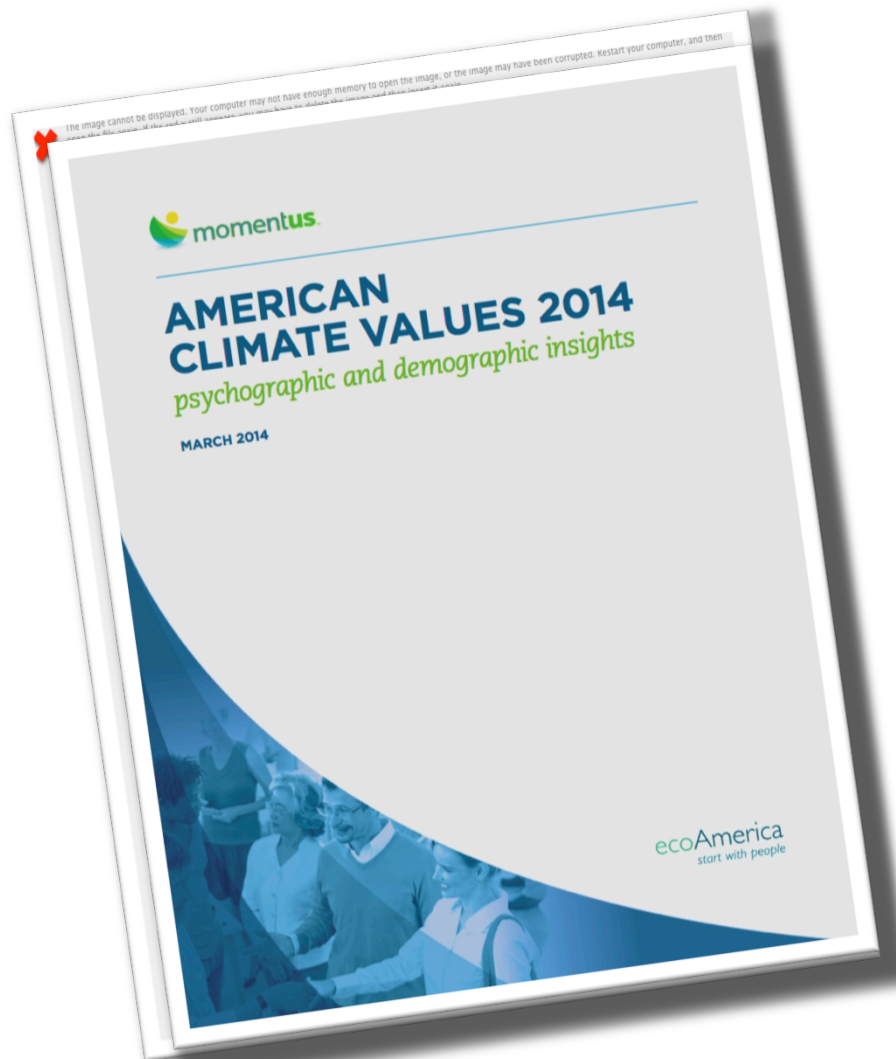
- Clean drinking water (84%)
- Clean air (83%)
- Safe neighborhood, free of toxics (79%)
- Access to natural spaces, parks (75%)

## Responsibility to do something about climate

- Companies that pollute (81%)
- EPA (78%)
- Me (75%)



# Psychographic Research



# VALS™ FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

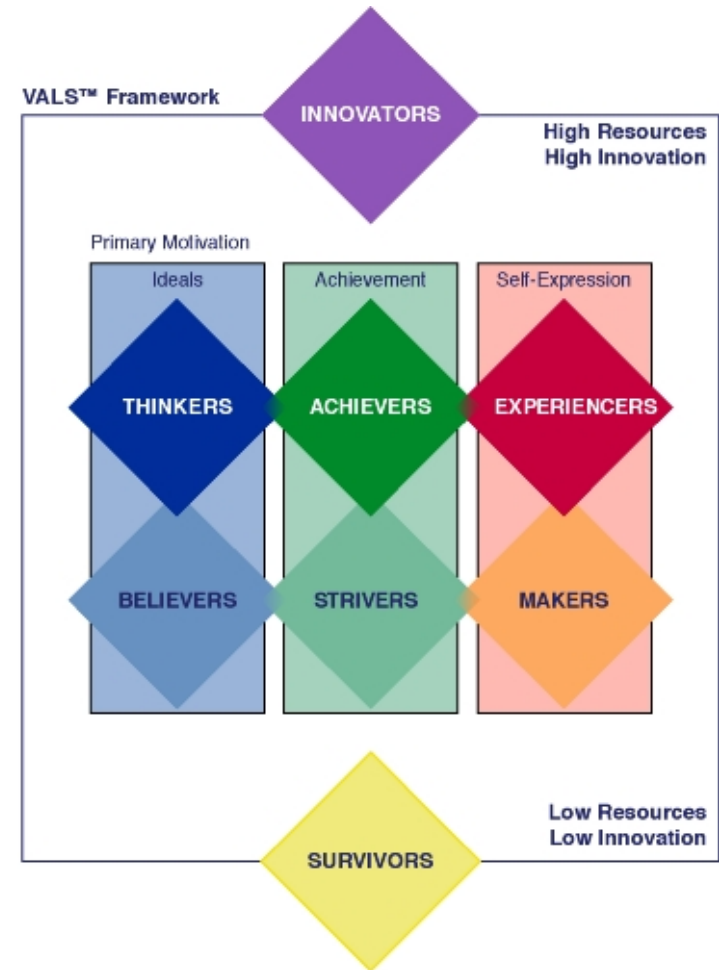
Using a proprietary algorithm, VALS places individuals into eight primary segments based on two dimensions:

1. **PRIMARY MOTIVATION:** *strongly contrasts consumers*

- Ideals
- Achievement
- Self Expression

2. **RESOURCES:** *amplify or constrain expression motivations*

- Self Confidence
- Innovation & Curiosity
- Health & Energy
- Age, Income & Education



# Benefits Are Essential for Action

## *FINDINGS*

- Mainstream Americans currently not seeing benefits of solutions.
- Many think they will be personally negatively affected by solutions.
- They don't see relevant penalties for not acting.

## *IMPLICATIONS*

- Emphasize real solutions and personally relevant benefits.
- Connect climate solutions with benefits for pocketbooks, families and communities that will occur soon.
- Show how doing something now will protect their quality of life, what they have worked so hard to achieve.

# Americans Follow Their Tribes

## *FINDINGS*

- We rely on views from their trusted tribes – family, pastor, political party leaders, favorite TV channels.
- If their “tribes” don’t support climate solutions, they won’t.
- Americans trust leaders in their daily lives, and look to them for guidance.

## *IMPLICATIONS*

- Form deep and lasting collaborations with groups of leaders who connect with Americans in their daily lives.
- Empower them to speak and lead by example in ways that support the needs of their constituencies – personalize climate, connect w/ solutions.

# Not Ready to Abandon the American Dream

## *FINDINGS*

- Upwardly mobile, status-seeking Americans strongly sacrifice, doing with “less”.
- “Keep up with the Jones” types are the core of American consumers – advertiser targets.
- They have “earned” the right not to be denied what others have.

## *IMPLICATIONS*

- Don't emphasize changes and new. They are afraid of change and don't want rules changed/goal posts moved.
- Need extrinsic motivation: emphasize rewards for good and avoiding bad.
- They are followers. Need to show success and being part of the group.

I **Shop,**  
therefore I am



# My Family First

## *FINDINGS*

- Achievement-oriented Americans have a strong “me-and-my-family-first” orientation.
- Climate action currently conflicts with their values.

## *IMPLICATIONS*

- These Americans are a key solutions audience – they vote and influence the rest of middle America.
- Promote benefits: “smart”, responsible, and protect children/family.
- Provide extrinsic motivation – rewards, success stories, leadership, workplace programs.

# Climate Action Is Elite and Alienating

## FINDING

- Climate beliefs are associated with educational, financial, and social networks of privilege and power.
- Climate change is not a practical, real issue for ordinary Americans.

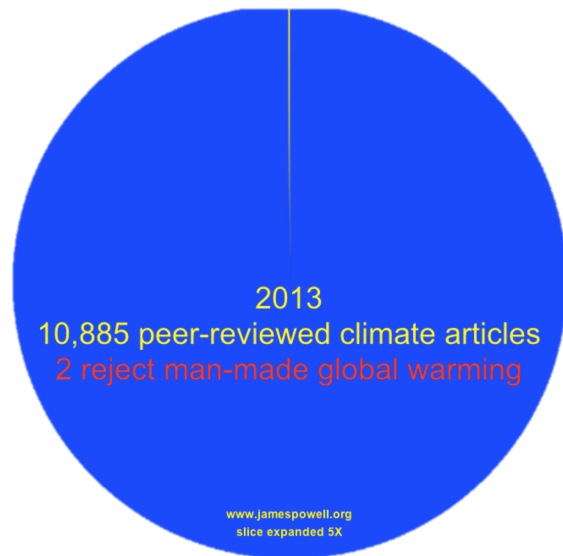
## IMPLICATIONS

- If we want Americans to care about climate change, we need messengers that they relate to, not intellectual, environmental elitists.
- **Solutions must benefit everyday American: pocketbooks and values.**





Kerry Rips Climate Change Deniers as 'Flat Earthers'



# Preparedness Can Motivate Action

## *FINDINGS*

- Local preparedness resonates with white-collar information workers and others who have not yet engaged on climate.
- Preparing is politically neutral and evokes **personal responsibility**.

## *IMPLICATIONS*

- Preparedness taps into sensible and practical action, now.
- Preparedness can include actions and policies that help prevent climate change (mitigation).
- This audience enjoys information – will support efforts to educate citizens.
- Will support and engage in preparing healthcare providers and the public to deal with climate change effects.

# Summary Recommendations

- **Focus on people vs. technology, policy, planet, bring them into the fold** (don't belittle, leave preaching to preachers)
- **Engage groups, and empower local leaders to lead**
- **Understand and incorporate everyday concerns**
- **Emphasize solutions, benefits and success**
- **Deliver and position solutions as bold and effective**
- **Emphasize relevant reality, use "science" sparingly**
- **Make pragmatic appeals, such as being prepared, regaining control, independence, and security**
- **Reinforce climate-health and climate weather**
- **Avoid connecting solutions with "new" or "change" – instead focus on personal benefit, family values**



# COMMUNICATING ON CLIMATE

*13 Steps and Guiding Principles*

DECEMBER 2013

ecoAmerica



## THE 13 STEPS

1. *Start with people,  
stay with people*
2. *Connect on common values*
3. *Acknowledge ambivalence*
4. *Scale from personal to planet*
5. *Sequence matters*
6. *Use “facts,” not science*
7. *Inspire and empower*
8. *Be solutions-focused*
9. *Describe, don’t label*
10. *Have at least 1 powerful fact  
from a trusted messenger*
11. *Prepare don’t adapt*
12. *Speak from the mountaintops,  
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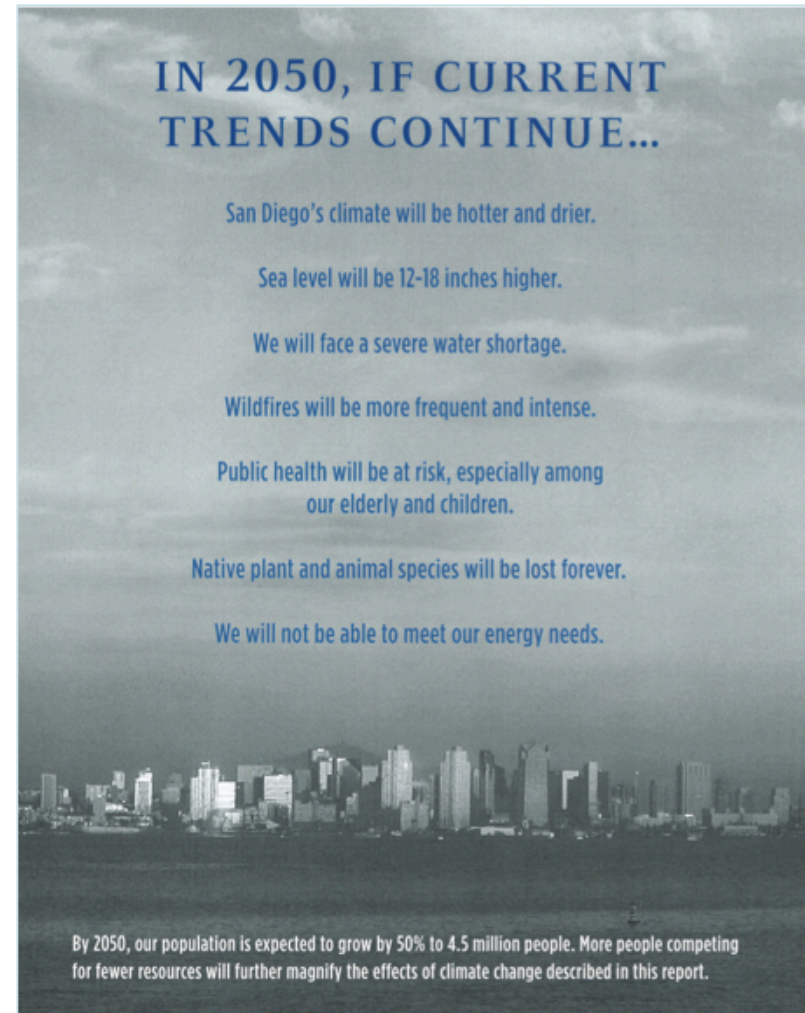
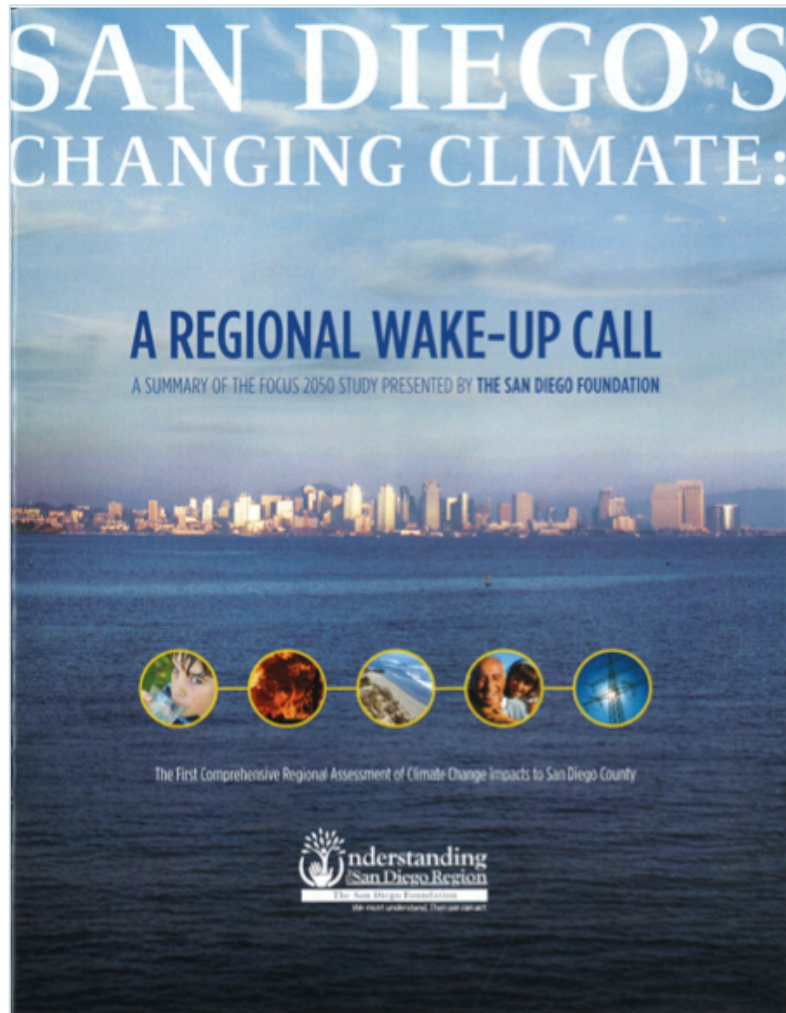
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# Before



# After

## San Diego, 2050 Is Calling. HOW WILL WE ANSWER?



## FACING THE FUTURE: How Science Can Help Prepare San Diego Regional Leaders for Climate Change



## People Agree: San Diego's Climate is Changing

Ninety-seven out of 100 global climate scientists agree that climate-warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities. The American Association for the Advancement of Science, a leading scientific organization, states: "Human-induced climate change requires urgent action. Humanity is the major influence on the global climate change observed over the past 50 years. Rapid societal responses can significantly lessen negative outcomes."

Recent public opinion surveys have found that an overwhelming majority—84%—of San Diego County residents believe climate change is happening and almost as many expect the impacts to affect them, their families and future generations. This report is meant to provide those who live, do business and govern in our region with up-to-date scientific understanding of how the impacts of climate change are likely to affect our region and how regional leaders are already responding to the impacts of climate change. Better understanding can help us, individually and collectively, decide which paths will define the kind of future we want to create.

### ABOUT THE SCIENCE

Information for this report was provided by a group of over 40 multi-disciplinary experts from local universities, governments, public sector agencies, nonprofits and private sector organizations throughout the San Diego region. Working together, these experts collected the most up-to-date science based on historical data, current trends, as well as complex models that project the various impacts of climate change expected in the region related to extreme weather events, water supply, wildfires, natural resources and public health.



84%

OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY RESIDENTS BELIEVE  
CLIMATE CHANGE IS HAPPENING



### ABOUT "2050 IS CALLING"

This report is part of an effort by the Climate Education Partners (CEP) to develop and implement a climate change education plan for the San Diego region. CEP is working with local expert scientists, educators, and a wide range of community leaders, helping San Diegans learn more about, prepare for, and respond to the impacts of a changing climate. CEP operates with the understanding that together we can sustain our region's quality of life, economic vibrancy, and spectacular natural beauty, not just today, but for all future generations.

To learn more, visit  
[www.sandiego.edu/2050](http://www.sandiego.edu/2050)

2050 IS CALLING - REPORT |



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Congressman  
**Chris Van Hollen**  
Maryland's 8th District

[About Chris](#)[8th District](#)[For Constituents](#)[Media Center](#)

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## Van Hollen Introduces the Healthy Climate and Family Security Act of 2014

Jul 30, 2014 | Washington

[Bill text \(PDF\)](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Infographic](#) | [Op-Ed](#)

Today Maryland Congressman Chris Van Hollen introduced the Healthy Climate and Family Security Act of 2014. This legislation is a simple, fair, and effective way to combat climate change while supporting robust economic growth and a thriving middle class.



It caps carbon pollution and reduces CO2 emissions gradually but steadily, auctions carbon pollution permits to the first sellers of oil, coal, and natural gas into the U.S. market, and returns 100 percent of the auction proceeds electronically each quarter to every American with a valid Social Security

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# PRACTICAL APPLICATION

*A Sample Speech*

# Putting Method into Practice

## A Hypothetical Example Using the 13 Steps

### 1. Start with people, stay with people:

Janine begins by showing understanding of and appreciation for her audience, and connects with their values throughout her speech.

**2. Connect on common values:** Janine builds rapport by connecting with her audience's values through a community treasure.

**3. Acknowledge ambivalence:** Here, Janine carefully introduces climate change, respects the potential spectrum of audience attitudes, and allows people in the room to hold differing beliefs.

**4. Scale from personal to planet:** Janine makes climate personally relevant by pointing to the local impacts, then scales up.

**5. Sequence matters:** By this point in her speech, Janine is able to ease into talking to her audience about climate change because she has followed the first four steps to open up the conversation (and her audience's minds).

**6. Use "facts," not science:** Janine talks about the drought; the water level is down, fish are impacted, and water supplies are diminished. Here Janine points to irrefutable facts that her audience can see with their own eyes.

**7. Inspire and empower:** After discussing the impacts of climate change, Janine moves quickly to motivate her audience. She does this by conveying hope, potential, and ability.

### Janine Robert's Speech to the Rotary Club of Sioux Falls, IA

Hello, and good afternoon. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak today. I am a big fan of your mentorship program here in the local high schools – it's a perfect example of the business community playing a leadership role to improve our civic life.

Today I am here to talk about one of our city's treasures, the Big Sioux River. Most of us have grown up fishing or rafting there, or just walking along its banks. I bet if I asked, each of you could recall several wonderful memories with family and friends along its shores, or wading in its waters. My husband and I have spent weeks fishing there with the kids.

Who has been to the Big Sioux River lately? For those of you who have, I think you'll agree it's not hard to see that the river isn't what it used to be.

Now I can bet we have many differing opinions in the room on what or who's to blame for these changes in our climate, and I would also wager that we can all agree we need The Big Sioux River! And, it needs us.

There is change happening right in our backyards, in the backyards of all of Iowa, and throughout the country. The water level is down, and higher water temperatures are impacting fish counts and fish health. Our main source of clean drinking water is diminishing.

We have the opportunity and ability to do something about it. We can help restore and protect not only the Big Sioux River, but also our livelihoods and our nation, for ourselves, our children, and future generations.

The good news is that there are already leaders in this community who have started to do something to help. Some of the high schools in your mentorship program are helping to plant trees near the river, the Mayor has implemented smart water use, several of our churches and church goers have taken The St. Francis Pledge to lead by example in reducing their impact, and solar power is a rapidly growing industry in the state. According to the Angus Leader, the solar power industry in Iowa grew 33 percent in just one year. These are just a few examples of the many meaningful and powerful things we can do to prepare for and help prevent further climate change.

And so I am asking you, as leaders in the business community, to be part of the solution. Solutions can be accessible, effective, meaningful, and good for business. Whether it is making your operations more efficient or planting native plants in your garden, there is something for everyone to do. In fact, there are over 100 ideas listed in the materials you have in your hands. I am happy to discuss them with you.

Finally, you have the power to set a new example, to help prepare and protect our community from the impacts of climate change, and to work to preserve our treasured natural heritage, the Big Sioux River. Join me in being part of the solution.

Individually we can make a difference; collectively we can do so much more.

Thank you. I look forward to collaborating with you.

**8. Be solutions-focused:** Janine is showing that solutions are accessible and meaningful. Notice that she avoids asking her audience to sacrifice.

**9. Describe, don't label:** Throughout this speech, Janine is using concrete and descriptive language that is familiar to her audience. She avoids technical terms or abstractions, like "mitigation."

**10. Have at least 1 powerful fact from a trusted messenger:** Janine doesn't weigh her speech down with numbers (which cause people to tune out). Instead, she inspires them with 1 powerful fact on the statewide increase in solar power.

**11. Prepare, don't adapt:** Janine uses the term "preparation" instead of "adaptation" to inspire action. She knows her audience understands the term, which conjures up proactive and preventative steps that scale.

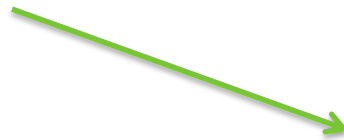
**12. Speak from the mountaintops:** Janine increases the momentum she has built up in the room. She talks big picture, and focuses on common good. In the question and answer session that follows this speech, Janine will be sure to avoid argument, specifically on details.

**13. Message discipline is critical:** Message consistency makes it easy for audiences to understand, remember, and share. Janine stays on point, and is clear and consistent.



# I. Start with people, stay with people

Begins by showing understanding of and appreciation for the audience, and connects with their values throughout the speech



*Hello, and good afternoon.  
Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak today. I am a big fan of your mentorship program here in the local high schools – it's a perfect example of the business community playing a leadership role to improve our civic life.*

## 2. Connect on Common Values

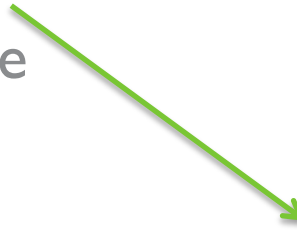
Builds rapport by connecting with the audience's values through a community treasure.



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### 3. Acknowledge Ambivalence

Carefully introduces climate change, respects the potential spectrum of audience attitudes, and allows people in the room to hold differing beliefs.

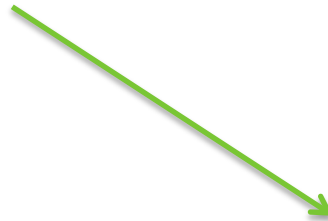


*Who has been to the Big Sioux River lately? For those of you who have, I think you'll agree it's not hard to see that the river isn't what it used to be.*

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## 6. Use “Facts” Not Science

Talks about the drought; the water level is down, fish are impacted, and water supplies are diminished -- irrefutable facts that the audience can see with their own eyes.



*There is change happening right in our backyards, in the backyards of all of Iowa, and throughout the country. The water level is down, and higher water temperatures are impacting fish counts and fish health. Our main source of clean drinking water is diminishing.*

## 8. Be Solutions-Focused

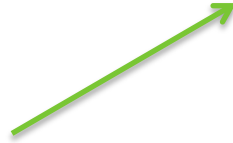
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# 10. Have at least 1 powerful fact from a trusted messenger

Don't weigh the speech down with numbers (which cause people to tune out). Instead, inspires them with ONE powerful fact on the statewide increase in solar power.

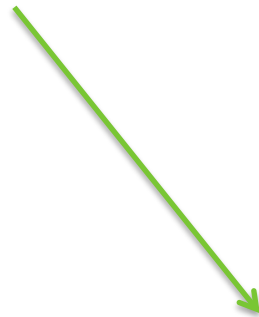


According to the *Argus Leader*, the solar power industry in Iowa grew 33 percent in just one year. These are just a few examples of the many meaningful and powerful things we can do to prepare for and help prevent further climate change.



# 11. Prepare, Don't Adapt

Use the term “preparation” instead of “adaptation” to inspire action. The audience understands the term, which conjures up proactive and preventative steps that scale.



*According to the Argus Leader, the solar power industry in Iowa grew 33 percent in just one year. These are just a few examples of the many meaningful and powerful things we can do to prepare for and help prevent further climate change.*

# 13. Message Discipline is Critical

Message consistency makes it easy for audiences to understand, remember, and share. Stay on point, and be clear and consistent.



*Finally, you have the power to set a new example, to help prepare and protect our community from the impacts of climate change, and to work to preserve our treasured natural heritage, the Big Sioux River. Join me in being part of the solution.*

*Individually we can make a difference; collectively we can do so much more.*

*Thank you. I look forward to collaborating with you.*

COMING NEXT THURSDAY...

## *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*

- Comprehensive climate communication guide based on social science research
- Joint project between ecoAmerica and the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions at Columbia U.
- Webinar on Thurs. Dec. 11, 3:30 – 4:45 pm ET (look for email from LGC w/ registration link)
- Visit **[connectingonclimate.org](http://connectingonclimate.org)** to sign up to be notified when guide is released (Dec. 11)



# ***THANK YOU!***

*Dan Barry, ecoAmerica*

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*Caroline Hodge, ecoAmerica*

*caroline@ecoAmerica.org*

*Download reports: <http://www.ecoAmerica.org/research>*