

# SILICON VALLEY CLIMATE ACTION NEWS *Silicon Valley CAN!*

Newsletter of the Silicon Valley Climate Action Alliance, Issue 8, January 2018

*“A publication dedicated to the sharing of good climate news throughout the Silicon Valley”*

## PERSONAL

### Online Apps Help Offset Carbon Footprints

by *Holly Lindquist*

If like me, you spend a fair amount of your time at the computer, you'll be happy to know that there are a number of online tools and apps designed to help you estimate and lower your carbon footprint. Here are a few to get you started:

Carbon Footprint Calculators: These online tools allow you to enter information, such as your electricity and natural gas usage, transportation choices, and more.

- [US EPA](#) – provides estimates for home energy, transportation, and waste, as well as recommended actions for reducing emissions in each category.
- [Nature Conservancy](#) – in addition to home energy, vehicle transportation, and waste, this calculator allows you to enter information about air travel, public transit usage, food consumption, and shopping habits.
- [Terrapass](#) – this calculator allows you to enter your exact car model, and miles traveled by each type of public transit (train, bus, etc.). Terrapass also sells carbon offsets that provide funds for projects such as dairy farm methane capture, landfill gas capture, and wind power.
- [Conservation International](#) - similar to Terrapass, this calculator allows you to buy offsets (forest protection) after calculating your footprint, which takes into account home energy, transportation, recycling, travel and eating habits.

[UCapture](#): This browser extension and app automatically offsets your carbon footprint at no cost to you when you shop with over 2,500 online partners, including Expedia, Walmart, Orbitz, Macy's, and Groupon. When you shop using the Ucapture tools, retailers partnered with Ucapture give them a portion of the revenue for carbon offsets, through reforestation, methane capture, and renewable energy projects. The website has a dashboard showing the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> your purchases have offset and your ranking among other users.

[OhmConnect](#): This app alerts you when dirty energy sources may have to be brought online to meet demand,



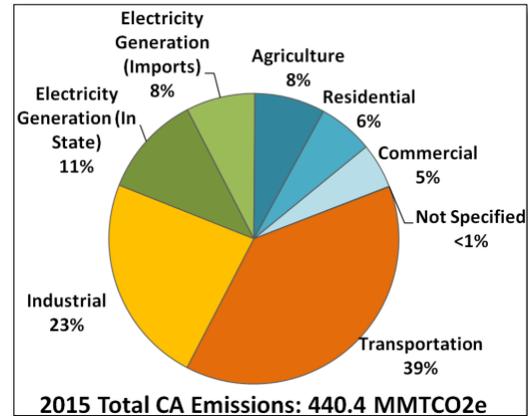
so that you can reduce your energy consumption. OhmConnect then pays you based on the amount of energy you saved during that period. Read more about the service in this [Forbes article](#).

## STATE

### State Bill Seeks to Ban Gas Cars after 2040 and PUC Orders Use of Battery Storage

by Holly Lindquist

In our [November issue](#), we reported that Governor Brown had expressed interest in California setting the type of fossil fuel car bans that have recently been adopted by countries like the United Kingdom, Norway, and India. Now there is a bill for this type of ban in the CA Assembly. Assemblymember Phil Ting (San Francisco) [introduced a bill](#) this month to ban the sale of new carbon-emitting cars after 2040. Starting in 2040, the state's DMV would only register vehicles that emit no carbon dioxide, such as all-electric or hydrogen fuel cell cars. The ban would not apply to vehicles over 10,000 pounds. "We're at an inflection point," Ting told the Mercury News. "By spurring the use of zero-emissions vehicles, we're creating a mechanism to ensure a healthier future for Californians, and the entire region." Transportation is California's [top source of greenhouse gas \(GHG\) emissions](#), so tackling this sector is crucial to meeting our GHG reduction goals.



During periods of peak electricity demand, fossil fuel (usually natural gas) 'peaker' plants are fired up to generate the necessary additional power. Since these plants sit idle much of the time, when they are in use, the generated power is more expensive than base load power. In [an order approved earlier this month](#), the CA Public Utilities Commission (PUC) will require PG&E to use batteries and other non-fossil fuel resources to meet demand instead of three gas-fired plants run by Calpin Corp. California solar generators provide surplus power, so much that at times we've had to [pay other states](#) to take it. This power could be stored to be used when needed at other times. With the falling price of battery storage, this shift could lower electricity costs, as well as emissions.

**What you can do:** Call, write, or meet with your state representatives and ask them to support Assembly member Ting's fossil fuel car bill.

## REGIONAL

### Portland Fuel Terminal Ban Upheld by Court of Appeals

by Holly Lindquist

[Last month](#), we reported on climate leadership in Washington state; this month, we have good news out of Oregon. In December of 2016, the Portland city council [unanimously voted](#) to change the city's zoning laws to ban the construction of new major fossil fuel terminals and the expansion of existing ones, becoming the first U.S. city to use its zoning code in this way.



This city ordinance was then overturned by Oregon's Land Use Board of Appeals, after an appeal from the Portland Business Alliance and the Western States Petroleum Association based on violation

of the commerce clause. In response, environmental groups, including Columbia Riverkeeper, Portland Audubon Society, and Center for Sustainable Economy, appealed to the Oregon Court of Appeals. This month, the [Court reversed the decision](#) from the Land Use Board, ruling that Portland could ban major expansions of fuel terminals. It is unknown at this time whether the fossil fuel interests will appeal to the state Supreme Court. The Portland case is reminiscent of the ongoing fight between Oakland and a major coal terminal development, which is [headed to court](#) .

***What you can do:** Keep apprised of the development and actions you can take (protests, petitions, etc.) in the Oakland case by signing up for [updates](#) from No Coal in Oakland.*

## NATIONAL

### Keystone XL Hits Snag in Nebraska and Tax Bill Spares Renewable Energy

*by Holly Lindquist*

While the Trump administration approved a national permit for the TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline, the project continues to be held up by local challenges. The Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) approved a route for the pipeline in November. However, it was not the route requested by TransCanada, and in December the PSC [denied TransCanada's motion to amend](#) the application. Opponents of the pipeline contend that the approved route violates state statutes. While that may not sound positive, the fact that TransCanada is stuck with this route [opens up the project to continued](#) legal challenges, which will continue to slow it down. The longer the pipeline completion is delayed, the less economically viable it becomes.

Congress passed a major overhaul of the nation's tax system in December, and while there is much to hate about the new law, one bright note is that [key tax credits](#) for wind and solar power and electric vehicles were largely maintained. These tax credits, which have been available for years, can offset 30% or more of wind and solar projects. The House version of the bill, passed in November, scaled back these tax credits for renewable energy as well as the ones for electric vehicles. These provisions were removed from the final bill, largely due to objections from Senators Grassley of Iowa and Heller of Nevada. Wind provides more than a third of Iowa's current energy and Tesla is building a major battery factory in Nevada.

***What you can do:** If anyone asks you about the KXL, you can tell them that the on-going struggle to halt completion of the KXL continues and has been successful for over 5 years in keeping over 800,000 barrels of tar sands crude from flowing DAILY to Texas refineries. And, anyone considering an EV, those great tax credits are still in place, so go out and get one.*

## INTERNATIONAL

### Australia to Build World's Largest Solar Thermal Plant

*by Holly Lindquist*

Last month, we reported on the success of the [100 MW Tesla battery installation](#) in South Australia. Now, South Australia has released plans for a [135 MW solar thermal energy plant](#), the largest in the world. The plant will use thousands of mirrors to reflect sunlight onto a molten salt reservoir at the top of a tower to drive a single turbine and will include eight hours of storage capacity.



US developer SolarReserve will install the plant for A\$650 million. The South Australian government has said that this represents the cheapest option available for energy generation.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### New Year, New Energy: Let's Talk About Climate

**January 25, Quinlan Community Center, 10185 N Stelling Rd, Cupertino, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm.** Assembly Members Evan Low and Marc Berman



Do you wish you could talk directly to your representative about climate? Share your concerns about the future? Now's your chance to have that conversation and ask your questions. Bring the kids/teens along, it's their future! Kids will ask their questions first, so they can get home early. With special guest, Jason Barbose, Union or Concerned Scientists. [RSVP](#).

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### Drawdown: 100 Substantive Solutions to Global Warming

**January 31, City Council Chambers, 456 W. Olive Street, Sunnyvale, 7:00 - 8:30 pm.** Sunnyvale, like communities around the world, is dealing with the urgent problem of climate change. But what can we do at the local level to address this phenomenon? Chad Frischmann, Vice President and Research Director of Project Drawdown, will highlight some of the top 100 solutions to reverse global warming by 2050. [Registration recommended](#).

### Power Shift: The End of Gasoline Cars?

**February 13, Commonwealth Club, 555 Post Street, San Francisco, 6:30 pm.** Have gas cars peaked? Last year Volvo announced it would stop making gas-only cars by 2019. Then India, France, and the United Kingdom said they will phase out cars that run on petroleum in the next couple of decades. When China moved in the same direction automakers put the pedal to the metal on bringing electric cars to market. With Detroit embracing plug-in cars, electric utilities sense an opportunity to grow their business as the age of oil starts to sunset. The industries of Henry Ford and Thomas Edison are getting together to eat the industry of John D. Rockefeller. [Buy tickets](#).

### Carl Pope: Climate of Hope

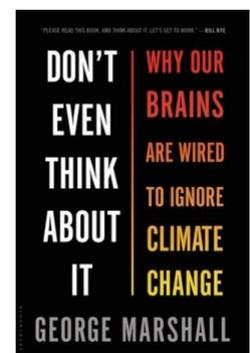
**February 13, Cubberly Theatre, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, 7:00 pm.** Carl Pope is a veteran leader in the environmental movement and spent nearly 20 years as executive director of the Sierra Club. He offers an optimistic look at the challenges of climate change, the solutions that hold the greatest promise, and the practical steps that are necessary to achieve them. Pope also highlights the contributions and bold actions that cities, businesses and citizens are making to reshape and jump-start a new type of conversation about climate change. [Buy tickets](#).

## BOOK REVIEW

by Nancy Truher

### Don't Even Think About It: Why Are Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change, By George Marshall, 2015

People ignore climate change in spite of overwhelming scientific evidence. Why is this? We select what to pay attention to: issues that feel familiar, relevant, and immediate-- and also what to ignore. This has a common basis: the need to avoid anxiety and defend ourselves. Marshall's book lists many ways in which our brains, and our values, assumptions, and prejudices, yield attitudes and motivations. To fight



the effects of climate change we need to focus on what we all share-- the qualities that make us human-- and to do so requires building trust. [Read more here.](#)

**CLIMATE PROGRESS**.....is happening, communities are winning, countries, states, and cities are acting, despite what “you know who” is attempting to do...

Dec 18 – [The Pope Wants Vatican Startups to Fix Climate Change](#)

Dec 27 – [Love Solar Power but Got no Rooftop? “Shared Solar” is Coming For You](#)

Jan 9 – [Rick Perry’s Proposed Coal Bailout Just Died an Unceremonious Death](#)

Jan 10 – [NYC Sues, Divests From Oil Firms Over Climate Change](#)

Jan 10 – [After Florida Gets Offshore Drilling Exemption, Other States Ask for the Same](#)

Jan 10 – [Britain’s Next Megaproject: A Coast-to-Coast Forest](#)

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