



CLIMATE ACTION & ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT FOR RETAILERS

WHY PARTICIPATE?

Climate change is both the greatest threat our planet has ever faced and also the greatest opportunity we've ever had to make positive change through innovation and leadership. The Climate Collaborative is here to help companies take meaningful steps to reverse climate change, both on their own and by working together. Together we can work to scale solutions to successfully meet the challenge of climate change.

Together, we can make a difference.

STEPS:

1. **Commit:** Make a commitment to climate action
2. **Act:**
 - a. Develop and implement a climate action plan
 - b. Encourage your vendors to take action
 - c. Engage consumers about the importance of climate action
3. **Impact:** Reduce climate impacts across your value chain

1. COMMIT: MAKE A COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE ACTION

More than 70 retailers have already joined 300+ natural products brands, ingredients suppliers, distributors, and manufacturers in committing to climate action through the Climate Collaborative.

National Co-op Grocers (NCG) and the Independent Natural Food Retail Association (INFRA) are two of the Climate Collaborative's founding supporters, as well as each making climate action commitments of their own. Together, these two organizations represent hundreds of natural products retailers.

Retailers can make commitments in any of the nine action areas shown below. **Food waste**, **energy efficiency**, **packaging**, and **policy** represent the areas in which retailers most frequently make commitments. **Short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs)** are also a very relevant area given that refrigeration is often the largest contributor to retailers' footprints.

To learn more or formalize your commitment, visit [www.climatecollaborative.com/take action](http://www.climatecollaborative.com/take_action) and click the “Make a commitment” button. It can be done online, takes only five minutes, and is completely free of charge.



2. ACT:

Develop and Implement Your Climate Action Plan

Once you have made a commitment to climate action, you’ll need to develop a plan. The Climate Collaborative is here to help you work with your staff and leadership to develop a Climate Action Plan that outlines your organization’s goals and the steps you will take to reach them. We can connect you with the resources and tools you need to help transition from commitment to action, including [monthly webinars](#), [events](#), [blogs](#), and a suite of other [resources](#).

Resources for all commitments can be found at the bottom of each page linked from the [Take Action](#) portion of the Climate Collaborative website. See the “Climate Action Plan Resources” section of this document for more information and examples of how your company can take action.

Customized assistance is also available from the Sustainable Food Trade Association (SFTA), for companies looking for additional support in building out a climate action plan.

Encourage Your Vendors to Take Action

Retailers have a tremendous opportunity to reduce the climate impacts not only of their direct operations, but all across their value chains, helping create a ripple that exponentially expands the effects of retailers’ individual efforts. In particular, as purchasers, retailers are well-positioned to ask vendors about their approach to climate change, and encourage them to take action.

Engage Your Consumers on the Importance of Climate Action

The Climate Collaborative also encourages retailers to look downstream to the people purchasing their products, and to develop strategies that incentivize and engage consumers on how they can reduce the climate impacts of goods they purchase. We hope to develop further resources on this over the next year.

3. IMPACT: REDUCE CLIMATE IMPACTS ACROSS YOUR VALUE CHAIN

Companies who make one or more commitments will share their successes and lessons learned each year by completing a short online report. This will help us measure our collective impact and learn from each other's experiences.

The National Co+op Grocers Climate Collaborative Awards celebrate the leadership and ambition of trailblazing companies that are leading the way on responding to climate change. As part of Climate Day at Expo West, these awards honor the impact that committed companies are making in their industry each year.

“As the Climate Collaborative continues to grow, we hope to see even more of our suppliers, vendors and fellow retailers also make the commitment. We know if we can mobilize enough of the natural foods industry to focus on even just one of the Climate Collaborative’s nine core initiatives that, together, we absolutely CAN make a difference.”

- Dan Gillotte, Chief Executive Grocer, Wheatsville Food Coop

Commitment Spotlight: Refrigeration at Hanover Food Co-op



Cooling systems house more than 65% of products at [Hanover Food Co-op](#), making them the biggest source of the store's climate footprint. Refrigerant leaks and emissions are a major emissions driver for most retailers, the EPA estimates that, on average, supermarkets in the U.S. leak about 1,000 pounds of harmful refrigerant gas into the atmosphere each year.

In 2010, the Hanover Food Co-op opted to prioritize better monitoring and reporting practices around its refrigerants and refrigeration leaks. To bolster this goal, they became the first food cooperative to enter the EPA's [GreenChill](#) program, aimed at partnering with food retailers to reduce refrigerant emissions and decrease their impact on ozone depletion and climate change.

Through the program, the Co-op generated annual plans to reduce refrigerant emissions, build system upgrades, and develop best practice methods for monitoring. This included investments in:

- New, high-efficiency units;
- More energy-efficient rooftop condensers called Trilliums;
- New refrigerants;
- Sealed door cases in-store; and
- Upgraded monitoring systems.



As a result of its efforts, the co-op has achieved an 82.9% reduction in refrigerant emissions since 2011 helping them win recognition as the "Most Improved Emissions Rate" through the GreenChill partnership. These reductions have saved the Co-op thousands of dollars and significantly reduced their climate footprint.¹

"We're all in this together," said Tom Guillette, Hanover Co-op's facilities manager. "The team at our Co-op has made massive improvements to our systems. We're saving money, helping the planet, and we've even hosted webinars to share our knowledge with big grocery chains and other co-ops."²

¹ <http://coopnews.coop/greenchill/>

² <http://coopnews.coop/worked-reduce-refrigerant-emissions-heres-happened-next/>

Commitment Spotlight: Renewable Energy at Good Earth Natural Foods



“By choosing 100% renewable energy, Good Earth is reducing our annual greenhouse gas emissions by a whopping 500,000 pounds of CO2 per year. That’s equivalent to saving over 25,000 gallons of gasoline – three tanker trucks worth – every year. Or equal to planting nearly 6,000 tree seedlings annually, and letting them grow for a decade. Also equal to preventing the annual greenhouse gas emissions from 45 passenger cars.”

– Good Earth Natural Foods, summarizing the impact of their switch to renewables.

Good Earth Natural Foods began a switch to solar back in 2012, starting small by investing in a few solar panels for their new building. In the years since the store has incrementally expanded its commitment to and investment in renewables to the point where they have reached 100% renewable power sourcing!

So how did they get there? They started small, had a store-wide commitment to reducing their footprint, and looked for innovative financing and sourcing mechanisms. They leased rooftops from surrounding stores to build out an 852-panel solar array that supplies over a third of their electricity.

The project was in part funded by a federal grant, and they worked with local partners to install and manage the project. To reach 100% renewable power sourcing, Good Earth Natural Foods joined Marin Clean Energy’s Deep Green Renewable Energy Program.

System specs:

- 852 solar panels (each 280 watts)
- 40,000 square feet of solar panels
- Two KACO 100 watt inverters hidden under the parking lot
- Total size of system: 201.5 kilowatts AC
- Expected annual output: 346,273 kilowatt hours



“We just built a very energy efficient grocery store, as grocery stores go. But the reality is full service grocery stores are huge energy suckers and we did what we could by building a 200+kW PV system. So along with being a customer of Marin Clean Energy’s Deep Green program, we and our incredibly supportive community, can feel good about supporting a truly green business for a long time.” – Al Baylacq, Partner³

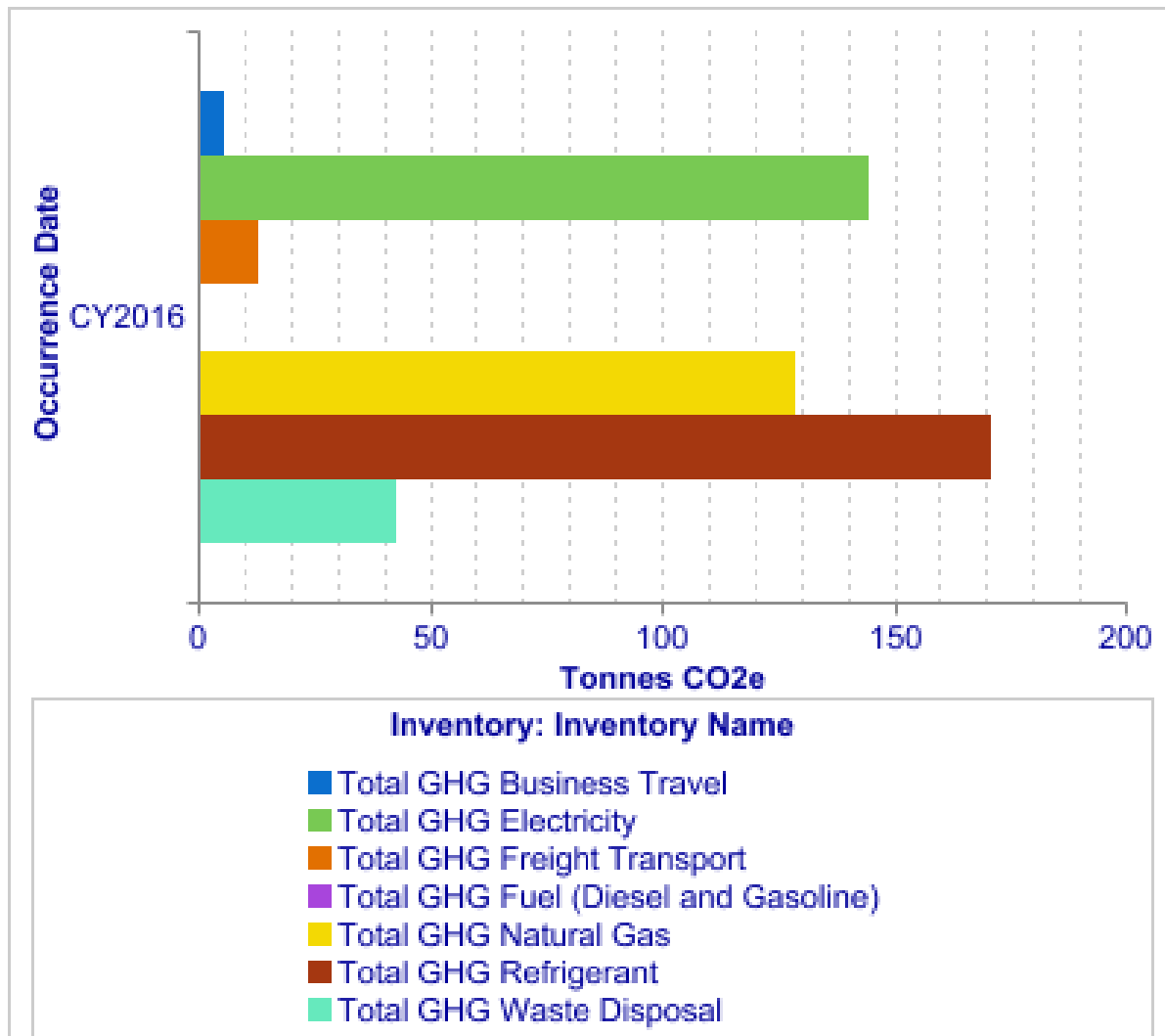
³ <https://www.genatural.com/about/solar/>

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN RESOURCES

Deep Dive: Sample Ways Retailers Can Act on Climate

The chart below shows a sample of average GHG emissions drivers for an anonymous retailer. The biggest drivers in most retailers GHG footprints' are refrigerants followed by electricity, heating and waste. Following the chart are more detailed examples of how retailers can take action to reduce their emissions in key areas.

Sample retailer GHG footprint



Refrigerants: As this chart shows, refrigerants make up the biggest portion of most retailers' footprints so taking steps to reduce refrigerant leaks and increase the efficiency of refrigeration units is often a strong starting point for many retailers assessing their climate action priorities.

To address refrigerants, retailers can make the [Short-Lived Climate Pollutants commitment](#). Retailers can then reduce refrigerant leaks by upgrading their systems, using more efficient refrigerants, inspecting systems regularly for leaks and clogged lines, and retrofitting open display refrigeration systems with covers or doors and improved motors.

Electricity: Electricity, heating and waste are also substantial components of many retailers' footprints. Making the [renewable power commitment](#) and switching to renewable power (through the purchase of RECs, PPAs, on-grid-renewables or on-site solar panels) are all viable options for beginning the transition to renewable power and can dramatically reduce electricity emissions.

Food Waste: Retailers can also make a [commitment to reduce food waste](#). Immediate steps to reduce food waste include consumer education, produce specifications, manufacturing line optimization, cold chain management, supporting policy changes that standardize date labeling, and waste tracking and packaging innovations technologies.

See page 10 for a fuller list of links to key commitment resources.

“There is a true and powerful symbiosis between good food crafters and retailers dedicated to sustainability -- we are united in a movement to displace demand for industrially produced food and replace it with mindfully made alternatives. Making specific commitments to environmental improvement is a logical and impactful way to identify ourselves as the good guys, and signal to others that we're putting our money where our mouths are.”

- Danielle Vogel, Founder, Glen's Garden Market

VENDOR ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

How can retailers engage vendors in committing to action?

- Retailers can build questions about joining the Climate Collaborative into existing communications through a number of methods:
 - Calls: A question about whether the brand has joined the Climate Collaborative yet can be added into protocols for speaking with vendors when they make sales calls.
 - Emails: Retailers can send out individual emails to vendors they work with encouraging them to sign on to climate commitments as part of a big-picture, value chain engagement strategy.
 - Newsletters: Communications and information on joining the Climate Collaborative can be worked into existing company communications.
- Retailers can incentivize vendors to make climate commitments and help build awareness and enthusiasm for action using the following:
 - Promotions: Retailers can organize in-store promotions for companies who have made commitments through the Collaborative and encourage vendors to participate in advance, creating a “race to the top”.
 - In-store profiling: Retailers can profile vendors who have made commitments through in-store profiling -- visual displays, posters, and signage – to highlight brands taking action.
 - Profiling in public communications: Retailers can showcase vendors who have made commitments in printed and online communications with customers and the general public.
- The Climate Collaborative is happy to support retailer efforts to engage vendors by:
 - Providing sample messaging/templates for emails, phone calls, and more;
 - Joining calls with vendors;
 - Convening webinars and one-on-one calls to introduce the Climate Collaborative; and
 - Mapping vendor lists against the Collaborative’s committed company base.

RETAILERS IN ACTION

Engaging Brands on Climate Action



The 2017 and 2018 NCG Convergence Conferences proved a productive meeting ground for co-ops looking to engage vendors on taking part in the Climate Collaborative. In the picture to the left, a co-op is engaging organic mints brand VerMints about making a commitment to climate action and joining ongoing Climate Collaborative programming opportunities.

Engaging in Climate Action Across the Retail Sector

Retailers are waking up to the importance of supplier engagement across the sector, to maximize the impact of their emissions reductions. Walmart, the world's largest retailer, launched [Project Gigaton](#) in 2017, aimed at removing a gigaton of GHG emissions from its supply chain by 2030—the equivalent of taking 211 million cars off of U.S. roads for a full year. Through the project, they are challenging their suppliers to join them in reducing emissions in six key areas: agriculture, waste, packaging, deforestation, and product use and design. They are partnering with The Sustainability Consortium and other NGO partners to measure and track progress.

Are retailers required to engage their vendors as part of the Climate Collaborative commitment process?

No, retailers are not required to engage their vendors, though the Climate Collaborative does ask all retailers to develop a strategy for looking beyond their walls and engaging their value chain on committing to action, and is available to actively support companies in doing so.

Sample Materials for Use in Vendor Outreach

- Questions for calls:

- Does your company already have an approach to climate change action? If not, do you plan to develop one in the next year?
- (If they answer yes to the previous question) Have you made a commitment to action through the Climate Collaborative?
- Request to participate for calls:
 - The Climate Collaborative is bringing together natural products companies to inspire and support action on climate change across the industry.
 - We have made commitments through the Collaborative already, but we know that our action alone won't be enough—so we are asking our vendors to get involved as well. Together we can achieve so much more!
 - There are nine commitment areas, and you can commit to one or all of them. Participation is completely free of charge. We encourage our brands to look into X, X, and the policy commitment.
 - Would you consider making a commitment within the next quarter or sooner?
 - [Add any promotional or other incentives here]
- Emails: Please see below for sample language retailers can use to encourage their brands to make commitments through the Climate Collaborative.

Subject: Help us take action to reverse climate change!

Dear **FIRST NAME**,

We need your help! **[RETAILER NAME]** is committed to proactively managing climate change—we know that doing so is not only urgent, but is also good for the planet, for our customers, and for our bottom line.

As a core part of our effort, we are participating in the [Climate Collaborative](#), a new initiative bringing together the natural products industry to collaborate, inspire, and support action on climate change. Through the Collaborative we have made commitments to **[INSERT COMMITMENTS]**.

However, our action, alone, is not enough—in order to succeed, we need our vendors, as well as distributors, manufacturers, and other retailers in the industry to work together to tackle common climate challenges, from transport to packaging to agricultural practices.

Will you join us in committing to action? [INSERT ANY INFORMATION ON REWARDS OR BENEFITS PROVIDED BY RETAILERS FOR COMMITMENTS]

Companies can make commitments through any of the [nine action areas](#) below:

- Agriculture - Integrate carbon farming into the agricultural supply chain.
- Energy Efficiency - Increase energy efficiency.
- Food Waste - Reduce food waste in the supply chain.
- Forests - Remove commodity-driven deforestation from supply chains.
- Packaging - Reduce the climate impact of packaging.
- Policy - Responsible engagement in climate policy.
- Renewable Energy - Commit to 100% renewable power.
- Short Lived Climate Pollutants - Reduce short-lived climate pollutant emissions.
- Transportation - Reduce the climate impact of transportation.

You can learn more and make commitments on the Climate Collaborative website [here](#).

Brands that make commitments in at least three areas will be eligible for the National Co-op Grocers Climate Collaborative Awards on Climate Day at Expo West.

Best,

[SIGNATURE]

Key Resources to Help Retailers Create Climate Action Plans

Refrigerants:

- Refrigerants Naturally: [Fact Sheet](#)
- CCAC: [Promoting HFC Alternative Technology and Standards](#)
- EIA Global: [HFC-free Technologies](#)
- Consumer Goods Forum: [Refrigeration Booklet – Commitments and Achievements of CGF Members](#)

Food Waste:

- ReFED: [Grocery Retailers and Food Waste](#)
- ReFED: [Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste by 20 Percent](#)
- NRDC: [Wasted: How America Is Losing Up To 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill – Recommendations for Business](#)
- FAO: [Food Wastage Footprint & Climate Change](#)
- EPA: [Tools for Assessing Wasted Food](#)

Energy Efficiency:

- EPA: [Energy Star Portfolio Manager](#)
- Berkeley Lab: [Buildings Energy Efficiency](#)
- Berkeley Lab: [Industrial Energy Analysis](#)
- Energy.gov: [Emerging Technologies](#)
- Energy Star: [Building Upgrade Financing Manual](#)

Packaging:

- Webinar: [Right Side Up: The Lowdown on Packaging Lifecycle Climate Impacts and Opportunities](#)
- TRAYAK: [Compass Software Tool](#)
- Earth Shift Global: [Package Smart](#)
- Intertek: [Instant Life Cycle Assessment](#)
- [OSC²](#) convenes natural foods companies to collaboratively address packaging sustainability, including climate impacts

Policy:

- Guide for Responsible Corporate Engagement in Climate Policy ([PDF](#))
- Learn more about our primary partner, [BICEP](#) – a project of [Ceres](#)
- Learn more about our partner, the [American Sustainable Business Council](#)

To see resources for all Climate Collaborative commitments, visit http://www.climatecollaborative.com/take_action and click through the relevant commitment areas for a full list of tools.