



#ShutitDown House Party Toolkit

Thank you for hosting a house party to kick off the next wave of Climate Direct Action and help raise money for the legal fund for the tar sands Valve Turners. On October 11, 2016, five brave individuals turned the emergency shut off valves of the major tar sands pipelines in the USA, effectively shutting 15% of the oil used in a day. Now these activists, three support people, are facing multiple felony charges, with maximum sentences ranging from 10-81 years in prison! Additionally, one documentarian is facing multiple misdemeanor charges in Minnesota.

But this isn't just about criminal charges and the legal process. This is about how we stand up and take serious action in a time of denial, with the fossil fuel industry now not only controlling the government of the US, but actually *being* the government of the US. This is about how we not only support those who have taken risk already, it's about how we find the courage within us to move to that next step ourselves.

We've had the good fortune to have some pro bono legal support, but the group has still needed to hire multiple lawyers given that there are eight people facing major legal charges. We need to raise another \$50,000 (as of February 2016) to cover legal expenses, trial expenses, and the support we need to ensure these stories get told to elevate the conversation around why we need climate action now.

House parties are one of the best tools we have to introduce people to climate direct action. And hosting a house party is a fun and powerful way to share the work you support with your friends, family and colleagues. This toolkit will give you all the information you need to put on a great event. Feel free to contact Sam at samuel.jessup@gmail.com if you have any questions or need any support.

Host Committees

Sometimes people can host a house party together. This lightens the load of organizing the party and increases the number of potential invitees. Feel free to form a “host committee” with a colleague, friend or peer who is also a supporter of climate change activism.

Setting goals

The first thing to do is set goals for your house party. Goals should be measurable and will likely include:

- How many people will attend
- How much money will you raise
- How many people will donate
- How many people will you inspire to take climate direct action

Logistics

House parties usually happen in a host’s home (hence the name) but you might want to hold it in a creative venue if you have access to one. The most important thing is that it be a comfortable space where you are able to have a personal experience with your guests. House parties work best when they are intimate spaces. *Most house parties last about 2 hours.* As the host you will want to make sure you think about the following logistics:

- A time, date and venue for your house party
- Refreshments or food if you are providing them
- Music or other ambience
- Audio/Visual equipment if you want to show slides or a video

Inviting Guests

It’s your party, you get to control the guest list! Make a list of people you want to invite to the party. Remember that only $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the people you invite will be able to come, so make sure to invite 2 or 3 times as many people as you hope to attend.

Initial invitations are often sent via mail or email, but it is important to follow-up with invitees by phone. Calling to invite your guests adds a personal touch and dramatically increases the number of people who will attend your party.

Feel free to invite a range of guests from potential donors to influential community members, elected officials and anyone you think the organization would benefit from having a connection to.

We have also made it possible to post your houseparty publicly on the ShutItDown.Today website. If you’d like to make your party public to connect with other likeminded people in your area, you can post your event at www.shutitdown.today/calendar - scroll to the bottom to add a new event.

Our Support

If this seems like a lot of work, don't be daunted! We can support you every step of the way. If you have any questions or need any help you can contact Sam at samuel.jessup@gmail.com.

We can also provide the following:

- A Valve Turner to speak in-person (depending on the location/timing and anticipated number of guests)
- A Valve Turner to speak via Skype
- A short film (7 minutes) on the action
- Special Online Donation Page / Can't attend page
- Materials you can print and hand out (e.g. a zine, a poster, a flyer)
- [Clear instructions on how to collect donations](#)

House Party Checklist

4 Weeks Out

- Pick a time/location for your house party _____
- Set a goal for your house party _____
- Send out email invitations _____

2 Week Out

- Make invitation phone calls _____
- Identify your guest speaker _____
- Make a plan for food and refreshments _____

1 Week Out

- Confirm your guest speaker _____
- Get materials about campaign or project _____
- Phone calls to guests you haven't been able to reach yet _____

Day Before

- Confirm you have all your materials _____
- Prepare food and refreshments _____
- Reminder email to everyone who has RSVPed _____
- Practice your statements if necessary _____

Day Of

- Set up your space _____
- Test your A/V (if using) _____

Day After

- Follow-up with guests to thank them for coming _____
- Send fundraising totals and sign-ups to samuel.jessup@gmail.com _____

Sample House Party Schedule (between 2 and 2.5 Hours)

Greet guests as they enter (20 Minutes)

Make sure to personally greet your guests as they arrive and thank them for coming. Introduce them to others at the house party. If possible have a sign-in sheet at the door to capture the information of people who come.

Mingle and make small talk (30 Minutes)

At this point you are just hosting a party, put on some low music and make sure your guests have their needs met. Feel free to ask guests what questions they have about the action and what they are excited to learn about.

Presentation and Ask (30 Minutes)

Get everyone's attention and make sure they are comfortable. Tell your guests why you support the Valve Turners and why you're asking them to as well. Introduce the guest speaker or video. Take a few questions and make a clear fundraising ask. And make a clear ask for people who are interested or curious about taking action - make sure you get their names and emails. Remember you can handle most questions one-on-one after the presentation.

Optional Action Component (30 Minutes)

The goal is to provide an inspiring and personal way to voice our support for bold and decisive climate action on social media, and to get us thinking about the next wave of action. This will involve practicing with bolt cutters and livestreaming to Facebook. See the attached action outline for step by step instructions and advice. And find an example on Facebook by searching for #WeAreValveTurners

Mingle with your guests (40 Minutes)

Put on some low music again and mingle with guests. Check in with guests who asked questions to make sure they were effectively answered. Make sure you thank guests for coming as they leave.

Preparing for the next Wave of Climate Direct Action...

In this seemingly new alternative facts world in the United States, we have a gnawing sense that it's going to be even harder to act truthfully in the face of climate cataclysm and a fossil fuel administration. How are we to find the strength to help birth the world we know we need?

The tar sands valve-turners, Emily, Annette, Leonard, Michael and Ken, are just ordinary people with the the strength of their convictions and the courage to act on them. They aren't specially trained activists: this is something that everybody can do.

Before setting out to cut locks at emergency shutoff block valve sites across the country, the valve-turners got together in a living room to practice using bolt cutters to cut through some chain. Meanwhile, the support crew met in another living room to practice using Facebook's live-streaming feature, so that they would be ready to capture the critical moments of the action when the time came.

You never know when you'll need to utilize these skills! So let's recreate this moment in your living room, at your house party. It's easy - anyone can do it. We'd love to have dozens of groups across the country live streaming their chain cutting adventures, so that people can see what you are doing and why you think it's important to stand up for folks who take big legal risks in order to bring attention to the climate catastrophe.

Supplies

- **Bolt cutters** with a handle that is 36" or longer. A longer handle provides more leverage, meaning that the bolt cutters will be able to cut larger chains. Long handled bolt cutters are also heavy and unwieldy, which is why we think it's a good idea to practice with them ahead of time.
- **Stainless Steel (not hardened) Chain** with a 5/8-inch chain link diameter or less. Pick a chain size that feels comfortable to you. Exerting 50lbs of pressure on 36" bolt cutters should be sufficient to cut 5/8 stainless steel (not hardened) chain.
- **Smartphone or tablet** with good **mobile data or wifi** connection and **Facebook app**
- At least **two participants**—one to operate the camera, and one to cut the chain.

Overview for Using Facebook Live on Android, iPhone and iPad

1. Tap **What's on your mind?** at the top of your News Feed
2. Tap **Go Live**
3. Tag your description with **#WeAreValveTurners** and **#ShutItDown**. You can also write a longer optional description for your broadcast.

4. If you would like to contribute your livestream to the #ShutItDown facebook page, make sure that the stream is set to **Public**, or we won't be able to see it
5. Tap **Go Live** to begin your broadcast
6. Tap **Finish** when you want to end your broadcast

Livestream statement suggestions

1. Introduce yourself—what's your name? Where are you from?
2. Say why you support the valve turners—or why you are ready to take action yourself!

Action outline—customize to your own needs and ideas!

Practicing concrete steps like this helps us get over some of the anxieties we might have about what it *might* be like if I took action. It leaves less to the imagination, enabling us to approach an action with the calm, determined and loving demeanor we intend to have when we set out. So here are some basic steps to try at home!

1. Lay out your chain on the floor and have the bolt cutters ready nearby
2. Have one person start the facebook livestream. Remember to add the hashtags **#WeAreValveTurners** and **#ShutItDown** in the description, and to check the privacy setting before going live
3. If the person who will be using bolt cutters feels comfortable (or would like to practice) speaking on camera, now would be the time to make a statement about why they support the valve turners. If you're comfortable, introduce yourself—what's your name? Where are you from? Say why you support the valve turners—or why you are ready to take action yourself!
4. Use the bolt cutters to cut the chain! This might take a little bit of elbow grease, but you can do it. If you are worried about being able to actually cut the chain, practice off camera first.
5. Switch roles if you want, or bring other people on camera to make statements of support and practice with the bolt cutters.
6. When there's nothing else to see, end the live stream

Final thoughts about livestreaming: Don't rush! You are basically producing live television. It doesn't have to be perfect, so relax, have fun and take your time (but keep the pace). The longer you are live, the more people are likely to see your video.