

# October 24th: International Day of Climate Action

Dear Global Warming Activist,

On September 21st, over one **million** people turned out for the global premiere of a powerful new film called *The Age of Stupid*. The film — which is set in a post global warming future — looks back at footage from the current time and asks the question: “Why didn’t we save ourselves when we had the chance?” It’s a pretty grim outlook, but at the same time it’s also empowering.

We are those people. And our actions right now can save the future of the planet.

It’s time to take the climate movement to the next level. That’s why on October 24th we’re joining an international day of action to tell Obama and other world leaders that “it’s time for leadership, not politics.”

We’re partnering with 350.org and hundreds of international environmental, labor, and faith groups to be sure our message is heard all over the world.

Your goal is to send this message to President Obama: Be a leader, not a politician. Stop global warming.

In this toolkit you will find everything you need to make your event a success. Including how to...

- **brainstorm ideas for a powerful event.**
- **register your event online.**
- **recruit attendees.**
- **run an excellent event.**
- **And other great resources.**

There’s still time to stop the worst impacts of global warming. But just barely. The most recent science is saying that the earth is heating even faster than earlier models had predicted. We seriously can’t wait much longer. That’s why it’s time to take the movement to the next level and let our leaders know that the time for political games has passed.

This is our moment,

Ben Kroetz

Greenpeace Online Organizer

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# 1. Why are we doing this?

Science clearly tells us that only dramatic action can prevent global warming and its catastrophic impacts — and the world is looking to President Obama to lead the way. Scientists say that if industrialized countries like the US reduce their global warming pollution by 25–40% (below 1990 levels) in the next decade, we may still be able to pass on a safe climate to our children. But time is running out.

Greenpeace is part of a large global alliance of organizations calling on the world's leaders to agree to a climate deal that is ambitious, fair and binding. Together, we are pushing for a strong climate treaty that will not only reverse the march of dangerous climate change but also help us tackle some of the world's largest challenges like deforestation.

Now more than ever, we need President Obama's leadership to stop global warming, and he needs to hear from **you** and everyone you know. We need thousands of marches, rallies, and vigils worldwide. The event you organize on October 24th will join the international cry for President Obama to be a leader and do what it takes to stop global warming. We can't do it without you.



Brooklyn Bridge March, August 30, 2009



Obama's Town Hall healthcare meeting in Portsmouth, NH on 8/11/09

## 2. Brainstorm ideas for a powerful event

The President of the Maldives (\*a small island country that has pledged **zero** future CO2 emissions) is personally staging the world's largest underwater protest. Which is cool, but probably won't work for you.

So, what can you do to send the message to President Obama? Hold a march, rally, or a vigil and do it as creatively as you like. Just remember that the focus is to very publicly challenge President Obama to be a leader — so if it's a potluck for the planet, he may not notice :).

Here are a few examples of the kinds of events that will work:

**A demonstration** is a form of nonviolent action by groups of people in favor of a cause, normally consisting of walking in a march and a meeting (rally) to hear speakers.

**A candlelight vigil** is an assembly of people carrying candles, held in protest (of disaster, tragedy, or suffering). Vigils can include speakers with a public address system and may be covered by the media.

**A “honk and wave”** is when a group of people assemble at a busy intersection, hold signs, and encourage drivers to honk in support of their issue.

Here are some ideas for where you could go to tell Obama to

“Be a leader, not a politician. Stop Global Warming!”

**Dirty Energy Sites:** Is Duke Energy a huge polluter in town that's been trying to convince everyone they're “going green?” Is your Congressperson really rotten on environmental issues? Hold a rally outside their office.

**A site of climate destruction:** Is there a coal-fired power plant or other environmentally hazardous site in your town? March to it, and call for climate leadership!

**An iconic location:** Show what's at stake. Is your town already experiencing global warming impacts like fires, sea level rise, and floods? Go there. Is there an iconic local place or landmark? Go there and hold a rally with signs and banners to show what's happening.

**Busy intersections or community parks:** Head to anywhere where there are lots of people. Are there busy intersections or bustling downtown shopping areas near you? Hold a “honk and wave” at a busy intersection where you ask drivers to “Honk to Stop Global Warming!”

**Show who is affected by global warming:** Future generations will be affected, and communities located near coal plants already are. Hold a silent vigil in their honor at the busiest spot in town.

Deciding the scope of your event:

- **Set a goal. How many people do you want to attend?**
- **Pick a goal and get everyone excited to hit it.**
- **Think about what will get lots of people's attention and the media's attention where you live.**
- **What have other groups done that was successful?**
- **What are you and your friends most excited about doing?**

**Talk it over with friends but don't sweat it. Just pick something that you're excited about and start recruiting. The sooner you set a time and location, the more time you have to spread the word!**

Be creative! Be yourself! We **Definitely** encourage you to add your own personal twist to whatever you do.

**Note: If you live within 2 hours of Lawrence, KS, Chicago, IL, Raleigh, NC, Tampa, FL, or Boca Raton, FL— please get in touch! We're planning some BIG events and we'd love to have you caravan there instead! Simply send an email to [activists@sfo.greenpeace.org](mailto:activists@sfo.greenpeace.org).**

### 3. How-to register your event

Registering your event is an easy way to get more people to join you!

- Head to <http://www.greenpeace.org/oct24>
- Fill out your Personal Information and the action location.
- Then scroll down and fill out the action Information (this is what you're doing)
- Make your action name sound unique, fun and interesting. You want people to see it and sign up!
- Add in the action start and finish time
- Finish by clicking "Save this action!"
- You will get a confirmation email from 350.org with your login and everything you need to manage your event.

### 4. Recruit people!

This is absolutely, hands down, the single most important step in making your event successful. You don't want to make beautiful banners and gorgeous props and have no one show up (because it won't get President Obama's attention).

How to get lots of people at your rally, march, or vigil:

- **Decide a time and location NOW so that you can start spreading the word.**
- **Call people you know who'll be most excited and invite them to a planning meeting. Share your vision for the event and why it's important, get their ideas, and enlist their help. Ask them how many people they can recruit and what they can do to spread the word.**
- **Talk to people who are part of big organizations — churches, schools, clubs, and ask the whole group to come and help get their members there.**
- **Email everyone you know.**
- **If you're on Facebook, start a group or event page.**
- **Take a sign up sheet and a stack of fliers everywhere. Talk to people, ask them to come (and sign your sign up sheet), and give them a flier so they'll remember what they'd signed up for.**
- **Remind people the night before or earlier. This is where the sign up sheet comes in handy.**
- **Speak confidently and passionately about the importance of this event, and ask people to make a firm commitment — the future needs them there!**

Why Calling People is the #1 way to get attendees:

Live conversations are the most effective way to get people to events. People get lots of emails and see lots of fliers every day. But if you take the time to talk to them personally and tell them why it's so important that they come, it goes a **long** way.

## 4. How to organize the event

### Here's a checklist for what to do before, during, and after your event

#### Before:

- **Check out the location.** Take a look and visualize your event happening there. Also, you'll be better able to give good directions once you've visited.
- **Find out if you need permission to hold your rally, march, or vigil there.** If it's public property (like a sidewalk or public park), you have the right to be there.
- **Recruit people to attend! #1 thing that will make your event a success (and don't forget to remind people the day before!).**
- **Make banners — have a sign making party with everyone who's excited to help and use that time to walk through what will happen the day of the event, give everyone a role for the day of, and make a few reminder calls to people who've said 'yes'.**
- **Bring materials.** Print the sign-in sheet (in this kit), nametags, banners, and anything else you might need.
- **Have a back up plan.** What if it rains?
- **Invite the media.** Just email or call the news desk, and tell them the "who," "what," "when," "where" and "why" of your event. Ask them to come! (This is for bonus points)

#### During:

- **Get there early and have your friends get there early too.** If you've done a good job of recruiting, you'll need some friends to help point the new folks in the right direction.
- **Greet people and make them feel welcome.** You should get their contact info so that you can stay in touch.
- **Make sure people know the plan and be sure to tell them the plan when they sign in.**
- **Take lots of action shots.** This will be really important for after the event.
- **Don't be afraid to step up and lead.** This is your event. Kick things off with a quick speech about what's going on and what everyone can expect to do at your event, and make it fun. Thank everyone for attending. If you don't feel totally comfortable doing this, find someone in the group who does and assign them the role.

#### After:

- **Have fun! Celebrate your success over ice cream, coffee, or your beverage of choice.**
- **Email everyone, thank them for coming, and let them know what's next (maybe you've already got a meeting scheduled!).**
- **You'll be hearing back from us after the event—so keep your eyes out! We want to know how everything goes and can't wait to see your photos.**

## 5. Materials

- **We've got a few additional materials to help you have a fantastic event. Just ask if you'd like us to email them ([organize@wdc.greenpeace.org](mailto:organize@wdc.greenpeace.org))**
- **Sign in sheet — see below. Be sure everyone signs in!**
- **Tips for making your own signs and banners. Do you want to know how to make a banner like a pro? Just ask.**
- **A poster for publicizing your event. It's pretty cool. You can even type the details of your event into the document. Just ask and we'll email it to you.**

## 6. Frequently asked questions

[I want the local TV and newspaper to cover this event — how do I do that?](#)

We've got sample media materials and trainings for you — just ask by emailing [activists@sfo.greenpeace.org](mailto:activists@sfo.greenpeace.org)

[What's this I hear about bigger rallies across the country?](#)

If you're interested in hearing about big events in your region, just get in touch with Anna Wagner at [activists@sfo.greenpeace.org](mailto:activists@sfo.greenpeace.org). It'd be fantastic to have you and everyone you know caravan to our big activities. So far, they'll be in Chicago, IL, Raleigh, NC, Lawrence, KS, Tampa, FL, and near Boca Raton, FL

[I heard 350.org is also having an event here, what should I do?](#)

Also a good question. It'd be great to have you do your own event -- the more events nationwide, the better. Head to section 3 for "How to Register" your event.

[This seems hard. I'm not sure I can do it.](#)

Hey, people get busy — but we have so little time to save the climate, truly, every vigil, rally, or march does make a difference. The climate needs you now, so if you can find the time to put something together you will have a huge impact. Do what you can — can you and 10 friends have a silent vigil on the steps of city hall with signs that say, "Obama, be a leader not a politician!" Can you and 5 friends go to a busy intersection and hold up signs that say, "Honk to stop global warming!"

[Will I get arrested?](#)

These kinds of activities are low risk, so chances are, you have nothing to worry about. Marches down public streets and vigils on public sidewalks are perfectly legal. Just use your head — don't do anything that's illegal. If the police show up, be polite, explain what you're doing, and say you'll be sure to stay on public sidewalks and streets. If they ask you to leave or move your event, you should do it. (Hopefully, after you've gotten some great photos!)

