

# In January

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Talk about climate change

The most important thing every single one of us can do about climate change is talk about it —



**why it matters to us,  
and how we can fix it;\***

*~Dr; Katharine Hayhoe*

<https://www.katharinehayhoe.com/>

Yale's Program on Climate Change Communications found that 74% of voters trust family & friends as sources of climate information; But 66% say they rarely or never discuss the issue with family and friends;



**\*If this is not easy for you to do try taking a few deep breaths and practice your deep listening skills!**

Dr; Hayhoe suggests looking for a person's interests, ask them about it, and point out ways climate change has impacted it;



**Let's do this for our children!**  
Science Moms provides unbiased facts about climate change;  
<https://sciencemoms.com/>

### ... and **advocate** for change!



**We need change at the national level; and together we have a much**

**bigger impact than we could individually by:**

- Starting productive conversations about climate solutions in our community;
- Getting more people talking about solutions;
- Building support for climate action with community leaders;

Citizens Climate Lobby members meet with their members of Congress across Indiana to advocate for effective climate solutions; UUCB members helped form the first Indiana chapter and spread chapters across the state!

**Have some time? Join CCL to connect with local members and receive weekly briefings with suggested actions;**



<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>



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# In February

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Eat green



#### Reduce the impact of what we eat...

“Food is the single strongest lever to optimize human health and environmental sustainability on Earth; Adopt a vegan, vegetarian or *flexitarian*\* diet, which is largely plant based but can occasionally include modest amounts of fish, meat and dairy foods.”

~ from the Summary  
Report of the EAT-  
Lancet Commission



[thelancet.com/commissions/EAT](http://thelancet.com/commissions/EAT)



\*Young people embrace the new *reducetarian* food movement;

<https://www.reducetarian.org/what>

In 2023 Project Drawdown rated **reduced food waste** and **plant-rich diets** at the top of 20 high-impact climate actions for households over the next 30 years;

<https://drawdown.org/solutions/reduced-food-waste>



#### ...and of what is wasted!

**Food waste** is responsible for twice as many greenhouse gas emissions as commercial aviation in the US.

~The NY Times, 01/01/23

#### Ways to reduce food waste:

- ❖ **Plan meals** before shopping to avoid spoilage; Buying only what you are sure to eat will also reduce waste along the supply chain;
- ❖ **Buy local** when possible, which tends to stay fresh longer;
- ❖ **Compost** your food scraps to keep them out of the landfill.

See  
**Eat Lower on the Food Chain**  
on the Earth Care website to  
learn about **how and why** to  
reduce dependence on animal  
products in our diet



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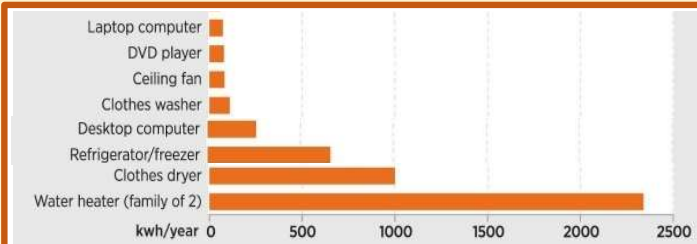


# In March

## Be energy smart

### TIPS for electrifying our homes:

Know how much energy your appliances use to set priorities;



**Water heaters** use about 20% of a home's energy, so upgrading has a high impact; Install an **EnergyStar**® heat pump water heater and **save 30%**



of the *installed* cost with up to a \$2000 federal tax credit; <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/home-energy-tax-credits>

Set your **refrigerator** to 35°F to 38°F, your freezer to 0°F; And don't block the air flow!

<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/refrigerator-freezer-use-and-temperature-tips>



Ready to replace your refrigerator? Compare **EnergyStar**® scores;



Want to know *exactly* how much energy your appliances or electronics are using?

Borrow an **energy monitor** from the Kirkwood branch of the Monroe County Public Library's "Library of Things" to measure how much energy each is using;

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Save energy on electronics:

Use surge protector strips to shut off electronics when not in use;



### Save energy on lighting:

LEDs are better for the environment than CFLs;\*

But LED features & quality vary:

**Color temperature (in Kelvin)**

- Warmer (2700K) for living areas;
- Whiter (3000K) for work areas;

**Accurate Color Rendering Index (CRI)**

- Look for CRIs in the 80s to 90s for better quality of light;

**Reading the labels**

- Brightness is listed with incandescent equivalents;
- Dimmable options are available;
- Compare efficiency ratings;

\*LEDs use less energy and last longer than CFLs, so there is less waste; And they do not contain toxic mercury like CFLs do;

### Joining Citizens Climate Lobby

(CCL) provides a great way to connect with local members and receive weekly briefings with suggested actions;

<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>



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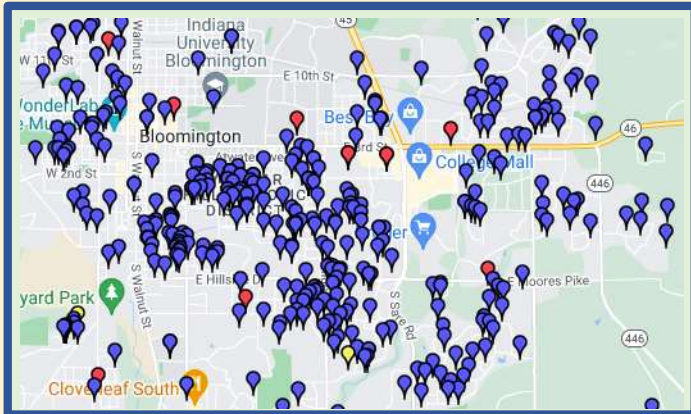




# In April

## Learn how solar can work for you

Indiana ranks 51<sup>st</sup> among states for adding rooftop solar, but federal solar incentives may still make it worthwhile; Local nonprofits are great source of advice and support; There are now over 1000 rooftop solar installations in south central Indiana, leading the Midwest area;



Sign up for an information session with



**SIREN**



**SIREN** (Southern Indiana Renewable Energy Network) on Zoom for advice on how to go solar, and how to apply for tax credits from the Inflation Reduction Act;

<http://www.tinyurl.com/HelpingYouGoSolar>

# TASK OF THE MONTH

## Advocate for Community Solar

Community solar is a solar energy system where households, businesses or nonprofits can subscribe to receive a credit on their utility bill for a share of the power the solar panels produce; It expands access to solar energy, avoids large upfront costs for customers and provides an alternative for anyone unable to place solar systems on their property;

### Hoosiers for Community Solar



is a coalition of over a dozen organizations working to enable independent community solar as a tool to make the benefits of renewable energy accessible to all Hoosiers;

<https://hoosiersforcommunitysolar.com>

Although proposed legislation to require rule changes allowing the creation of community solar facilities did not receive a hearing in 2024, the coalition will continue to work to gain bipartisan support;



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# In May

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Shift your ride...

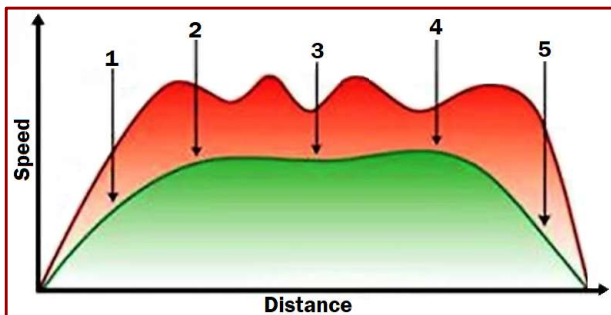
#### For local travel:

**Drive less:** Cutting back six miles per day saves 2000 miles a year;

- ✓ Take a bus, bike or walk;
- ✓ Carpool to work & church;
- ✓ Combine trips & use GPS;
- ✓ Work or meet from home!

#### Drive more efficiently:

1. Accelerate gently;
2. Maintain a steady speed;
3. Anticipate traffic flow;
4. **Avoid speeding!**
5. Coast to decelerate;



#### Drive an EV, a Plugin-Hybrid EV, or an efficient hybrid if possible;

When gasoline combines with oxygen as you drive, each gallon emits 19.6 lbs; of CO<sub>2</sub> in addition to the 5 lbs; of CO<sub>2</sub> it had emitted before reaching the pump;

<https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/credits-for-new-clean-vehicles-purchased-in-2023-or-after>



#### For long distance travel:

#### Reduce the impact of air travel



In 2022 aviation accounted for 2% of *global* CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and 10% of all transportation-related emissions in the US;

Covid-19 lockdowns lowered airplane emissions, but they are on track to surpass 2019 levels by 2025;

Low-emission fuels and more efficient aircraft can reduce the impact of flying but aren't expected to keep up with growing demand;

#### TRAVEL TIPS

- ✓ Eliminate one or more professional meetings or business trips;
- ✓ Combine trips to two locations;
- ✓ When you need to fly, try to fly nonstop and fly economy, which allows more seats on a plane;
- ✓ Going on vacation? Look for destinations closer to home;
- ✓ Take a bus or train if time allows, especially for one or two travelers;
- ✓ For a family going under 1000 miles, drive the most efficient car possible instead of flying;



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# In June

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Stay cool wisely

#### Adjust your thermostat to save energy and money:

Set your thermostat for comfort when home but **turn it up** when away;

#### To keep cool on a hot day:

- Run a fan in the room you're in;\*
- Dress for the weather;
- Drink cool liquids;

\*Ceiling fans help you feel cooler; *but turn them off when you leave the room!*

They just "stir" the air!



#### Take advantage of cooler nighttime temperatures:

- On cool nights, use a window fan to exhaust hot indoor air, pulling in cooler outside air;
- In the morning close windows, blinds and curtains to keep out the sun and hold in the cooler air;
- If you need to reduce humidity, run the AC early in the morning;



#### Installing a programmable thermostat

is an easy way to save energy and money; It allows you to set your home's temperature for different times of day, and different days of the week, or away for long periods;

#### When you replace an old HVAC system, get an efficient heat pump!

Heat pumps are essentially two-way air conditioners that efficiently heat and cool your home;

#### Take Advantage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) incentives:

- A tax credit covers 30 percent of the costs of purchase and installation for the most efficient heat pumps, up to \$2,000 per year; (Savings depend on what is owed in federal taxes; Program lasts through 2032;)
- This is in addition to the \$1,200 available in tax credits for other energy-saving renovations and appliances;

<https://www.in.gov/oed/grants-and-funding-opportunities/homeowner-incentives/>



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# In July

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Be water wise

#### What uses the most water in homes?

**Traditional toilets** can use over 25% of household water;

Installing plastic bottles filled with water in the tank or a toilet-displacement device can save over a gallon per flush;



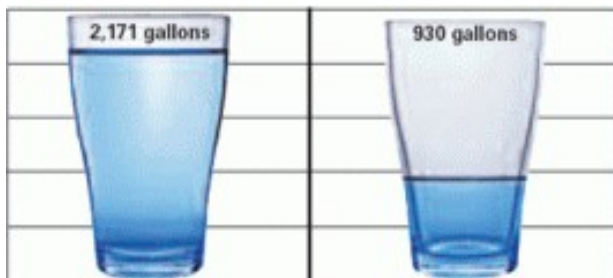
**Install dual flush toilets when you can!**

#### Install low-flow showerheads & faucet aerators

Annual Gallons Saved:

Showerhead

Faucet Aerator



#### Saving water also saves the **city electricity:**

CBU uses  $\pm 6,000$  kWh per 1000 gallons (1 unit) of water:

- $\pm 50\%$  to purify, pump the finished water
- $\pm 50\%$  to move and treat the wastewater;

#### Heating water uses **14-18%** of a typical home's energy use;

- Water shouldn't feel too hot to your hands;
- Set the temperature to 120°F;
- Add a timer on your water heater to turn it down for a few hours after evening use or when away for a longer period;

#### Time to replace your water heater?

- Consider a tankless water heater;
- The Inflation Reduction Act has a \$1,750 incentive toward an electric heat pump water heater;



<https://www.energy.gov/energy-saver/articles/inflation-reduction-act-2022-what-it-means-you>



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# In August

## Reduce the use of plastic & paper

### TIPS:

- ❖ Look for glass/boxed packaged food;
- ❖ Take your own bags, washable bottles & take-out containers;;
- ❖ Buy in bulk and take containers to fill;
- ❖ Look for 100% (80% post-consumer) recycled toilet paper & facial tissue;
- ❖ Avoid the use of paper towels by using old clothes or towels to clean;
- ❖ Read newspapers online, borrow or buy e-books, shop at the library book sales or secondhand bookstores;
- ❖ Look for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper products and packaging;
- ❖ When you need to print, use recycled paper and print on both sides;

### The environmental impact of a plastic water bottle:

The Pacific Institute estimates that the energy to produce, fill, seal and label each bottle, plus the energy for shipping and recycling or (worse!) disposing of it, is like filling the bottle  $\frac{1}{4}$  full of oil; **Only 12%** of our plastic waste will be recycled; The rest ends up in our lakes, rivers and ocean;



## TASK OF THE MONTH

## Adopt earth-friendly cleaning methods

### TIPS:

#### For House Cleaning:

- ❖ Look for Green Seal® certification;
- ❖ Look for powdered cleaners that dissolve in water;
- ❖ Use white vinegar and water;

#### For Personal Care:

- ❖ Look for dish soap bricks, shampoo bars, body lotion bars, toothpaste tablets; (They avoid the need for plastic packaging!)
- ❖ Use oxygen bleach alternatives;

#### For Laundry:

- ❖ Avoid PVA-wrapped laundry pods and thin laundry sheets because their top ingredient is PVA (polyvinyl alcohol) which has been detected in drinking water and breast milk;
- ❖ Use boxed powder or look for pre-measured compressed tablets;
- ❖ Also avoid fabric softener and dryer sheets, which emit toxic VOCs;

Do you have other experience with products or other tips to share?  
Send them to us!

[gstf;zero@uubloomington.org](mailto:gstf;zero@uubloomington.org)



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# In September

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Reduce the impact of doing laundry

**Wash in cold water, never warm\* and rarely in hot**

- \* Warm water doesn't clean clothes any better than cold;
- Presoak heavily-soiled clothes first;
- Wash very greasy things in hot water;



Reduce plastic by using boxed powdered detergent;

### Air dry year 'round!

Hang clothes indoors in the winter to improve comfort since heating dries your air;

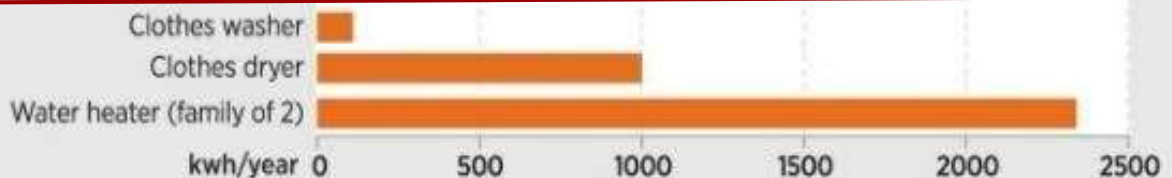


Dryers take ±5 lbs; of coal per load!

<https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=667&t=2>



Clothes dryers are second only to water heaters in energy used in laundry, so **washing in cold water** and hanging your clothes to dry save energy and money; Touch up in a dryer when almost dry if needed;



### Save on hot water

Check the temperature of your hot water; If it feels too hot straight from the tap, *turn it down* to the recommended **120° F**;

Heating water can use as much energy as the rest of an average household's non-heating/cooling electric appliances combined, or up to **18%**;

### Saving on other water uses:

- Use a wet brush rather than rinsing dishes before putting them in the dishwasher;
- Wash your hands in cool water, especially if your water heater is located far from your faucet;



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# In October

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Be heat wise

#### Reduce your heating bills:

Do a home energy self-assessment to



find ways to reduce waste and improve your comfort;

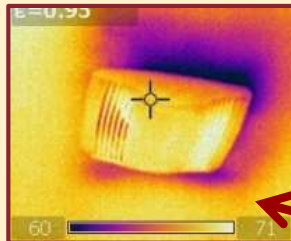
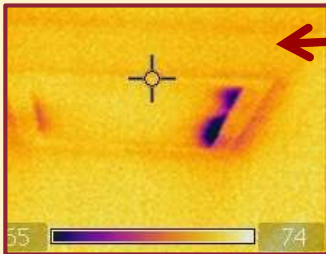
<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/home-energy-assessments>

#### Air leaks can be like leaving a window open all the time;

Fill or cover gaps with caulk, expanding foam, or rigid insulation board;

#### Have hard-to-find leaks?

Thermal cameras can show where air is leaking in or out;



Ask to borrow a thermal camera from GSTF:  
[zero;gstf@uubloomington;org](mailto:zero;gstf@uubloomington;org)

Insert an inflatable draft stopper in your fireplace;

<https://www.battdoor.com/product-tag/fireplace-plugs/>



#### Try gradually lowering your thermostat when home

Start with a 1°F change, take time to adjust, then try a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree lower, and even lower for sleep;



Adding insulating cellular shades on windows makes a noticeable difference

#### Where to look for leaks?

- Door and window frames;
- Electrical, gas service, cable TV and phone line entrances;
- Baseboards;
- Around wall or window air conditioners;
- Where dryer vents pass through exterior walls;
- Vents and fans;
- Attic hatches;
- Fireplace dampers;
- Electrical outlets;
- Switch plates;

Foam switch plate and outlet inserts are effective and easy to install;



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# In November

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Plan greener giving

#### Some gift ideas include:

- ❖ Deliver a homemade meal or baked goods;
- ❖ Give theater tickets;
- ❖ Offer to babysit so parents can have a night out alone;
- ❖ Give family memberships to local museums;
- ❖ Give things you know people need and will use;
- ❖ Shop for slightly-used items on sites like Facebook Marketplace;
- ❖ Give a donation to a worthy cause in their name;

#### To wrap your gifts use:

- ✓ Colorful newspaper pages;
- ✓ Wrapping paper, ribbon and bows from previous years;
- ✓ Handmade bags from leftover fabric; Make them with handles to be used for shopping!

When you shop, bring cloth bags and reusable produce bags, and wash and reuse any plastic bags you get;



### Buy used (and donate!)

- ❖ Healing Hands (free to low-income households);
- ❖ Opportunity House;
- ❖ My Sister's Closet;
- ❖ Habitat for Humanity Restore;
- ❖ Bloomington Thrift Shop;
- ❖ St Vincent de Paul (which will pick up furniture and mattresses)
- ❖ Salvation Army or Goodwill;
- ❖ Monroe County Public Library Book Sale;
- ❖ UU church GSTF clothing swaps;
- ❖ UUCB Bazaar's White Elephant!

Did you know that what we consume accounts for 16% of the average American's energy use?

When we buy less stuff, we simplify our lives, save money and lower our carbon footprint;

### Have you joined CCL yet?

It's a great way to connect with local members and receive weekly briefings with suggested actions;



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## Celebrate your accomplishments!

### We hope you...

- feel more comfortable **talking** about climate change;
- include more vegetarian and vegan meals in your diet;
- will be ready to take advantage of rebates, credits and other incentives when appliances need to be replaced;
- are knowledgeable about **-and can advocate for-** community solar;
- drive more efficiently and *less* by combining trips or carpooling;
- have your thermostats turned up in hot weather when away;
- reduced your use of hot water, and will consider a heat pump next time;
- use cold water for laundry except for items that are heavily soiled or need to be disinfected;
- air-dry clothes year-round, with just touch-ups in a dryer as needed;
- can use less plastic and adopt earth-friendly cleaning methods;
- have stopped air leaks and lowered your thermostats in the heating season, especially when away during the day or extended periods;
- give things people really need, local memberships or experiences;
- talk with family and friends about what and why you have changed.



If you weren't able to take all the suggested actions or want to do more, send an email to [contact@EarthCareIndiana.org](mailto:contact@EarthCareIndiana.org) and ask for help!



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