Join the Big Fast for the Climate

Contributed by Ted Glick, Jere Locke, Jan Lundberg
17 April 2009

This Monday we're putting our voices where our mouths full of food are. The world appears to be facing climate extinction, and still we're trapped in our economic "reality" and political "hope." But deep down we know that, if we've paid attention, Earth's climate won't wait until we find it convenient to slash emissions and population growth. So we are fasting.

In late summer of 2007 folks in every state in the U.S. and beyond took action to place our concern over the changing climate at the very top. By not eating anything, for the Climate Emergency Fast, the statement was clear that we meant business -- like Gandhi did. We need results, just as he and his downtrodden people did, as they were up against the evil empire. We have an evil empire to fight too, known as ourselves and our modern, industrial culture of convenient consumption.

The instigator of the 2007 campaign, Ted Glick, worked tirelessly to bring activists together and inspire us to keep going. He fasted longer than anyone, worrying us by going months without solid food after several days of just water. I took the opportunity to fast 23 days, on just water. I always appreciate the chance to fast for my health, which is the way I was brought up. What did we accomplish? Hard to say. For me I felt it was worthwhile when I did an interview on CBS Radio Network on Day 16, and could bring up issues such as the plastic plague.

It's time again. Now join us. Below is the letter drafted by Ted Glick and his colleague Jere Locke, with input from others. I asked that lifestyle change be included along with Ted's and Jere's legislative goals to slash carbon emissions, which it was. You can follow a link to register as a faster.

Try the fast, you'll like it -- or at least you'll learn something about your body and mind, and teach others. Or just spread the word of our fast for the climate. At bottom are links to previous articles on our fasts and on the process of fasting. Thank you. - JL

Fasting for Our Future

It’s Time for Strong Action on Climate!

On Monday, April 20th, members of Congress will be returning to Washington from their spring recess. On that day hundreds of people around the USA and in other countries will be fasting, abstaining from solid food, engaging in what Mahatma Gandhi called, “the sincerest form of prayer.” Some will continue fasting for more than one day, some for 25-40 days or more.

We are writing as people who will be part of this action to invite you to join with us. You can sign up by clicking here.

Why 25-40 or more? Because we want to call attention to the need for the U.S. and other industrialized countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020. This is a target adopted by climate negotiators from the nations of the world at a United Nations climate conference in Bali, Indonesia in December, 2007. It is a target that, if reached, would give the world some chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change.

We will be fasting because we are entering a critical period in the struggle to get the U.S. government to act decisively on the climate crisis. With the introduction in the House Energy and Commerce Committee of the “American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009,” a process has been started that will lead to a vote in the full House this summer and in the Senate in the summer or fall. Hearings on this bill begin the week of April 20th.

We need federal legislation that mandates a definite 25-40% (1990 baseline) or more decrease in greenhouse gas emissions (35-50% from current levels). We must slash greenhouse gas emissions now! We must discourage the building of any new coal plants. And there can be no giveaways to polluters: 100% of permits to pollute under a cap must be auctioned, or a substantial carbon fee must be enacted, to ensure that the shift from fossil fuels to renewables, efficiency and earth-friendly lifestyles happens rapidly.

In addition, we support legislation with no problematic and complicating “offsets;” that provides for a just transition for workers and communities most affected by the shift away from fossil fuels; that returns a substantial percentage of the money raised to the public to help pay the increased costs of carbon-based fuels; that creates millions of green jobs and pathways out of poverty; that assists vulnerable communities and developing countries in the transition to low-carbon economies; and that enables a shift from unsustainable industrialized agriculture to sustainable practices that support family farmers.

The American people support a shift from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency. A Zogby poll, for example, taken in November, 2008 reported that, “while the vast majority of Democrats (96%) and independent voters (77%) view clean energy investment as a key means to boost the U.S. economy, more than half of Republican voters (58%) also said the same.”

And yet too many of our government representatives on Capitol Hill are either controlled by the coal and oil companies, are afraid of taking them on or just don’t appreciate the depth of the climate crisis we are facing and the need for urgent action. Some of them, apparently, also don’t appreciate that investments in renewables and efficiency create several times as many jobs as investments in dirty and polluting industries.

We are asking those who support the demands of this fast to take action in whatever ways you can, and to take action of some kind every day until a strong climate bill is signed by President Obama. A list of actions to take can be found at http://www.fastingforourfuture.org.

Again, we are entering a critical stage in our struggle for strong federal legislation by the U.S. government. More and more of us must make personal lifestyle changes to reduce our carbon footprint, and local, state and regional actions must continue, but the time is literally now for strong federal action. That is why we are initiating this call, why we intend to fast, and why we hope that you will join us in whatever ways you can.

Sincerely,

Elliott Adams, Past President of Veterans for Peace

Craig S. Altemose, Co-coordinator, Massachusetts Power Shift

Edward Asner, Actor/Activist

May Boeve

Kolya Braun-Greiner, M.Div.

Sheila Collins, National Jobs for All Coalition, political science professor

Steve Crowley, S. Burlington, Vt.

Jared Duval, author and activist

Patricia Egan

AshEL Eldridge, Alliance for Climate Education, Oakland Resilience Alliance

Bruce K. Gagnon, Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space

Ted Glick, climate activist and writer

Eban Goodstein, Director, National Teach-in on Global Warming Solutions

Connie Hogarth, Climate Crisis Coalition

Jonathan Isham, Jr., Middlebury College

Earl Katz, President, Public Interest Pictures

Diane Ladd, three-time Academy Award nominee, Actress, Writer, Director

Jan Lundberg, Portland, Or., with CultureChange.org and Sail Transport Network

Jere Locke, Director, Texas Climate Emergency Campaign

Dana Kuhnline, Coordinator, Alliance for Appalachia

Elena Rojas Martinez

Fr. Paul Mayer, Climate Crisis Coalition

Bill McKibben, 350.org

Kandi Mossett, Indigenous Environmental Network

Sierra Murdoch, coordinator, Power Past Coal campaign

Ethan Nuss, Maryland youth organizer

Janisse Ray, environmental author and activist

Joshua Kahn Russell, Grassroots Action Manager, Rainforest Action Network

Robert Shetterly, artist, Americans Who Tell the Truth

Vandana Shiva, author and activist

Ezra Small, Climate Crisis Coalition

Rev. Fred Small, Senior Minister, First Parish in Cambridge, MA (Unitarian Universalist),
Co-chair, Religious Witness for the Earth

Jayne Lyn Stahl, poet, essayist, founder of Writers-at-Large

Alli Chagi-Starr, Green for All, Art in Action

Tom Stokes, Coordinator, Climate Crisis Coalition

Josh Tulkin, National Field Director, Energy Action Coalition

Karen Weinberg, Cool Communities, Bath, Maine

Diane Wilson, Calhoun County Resource Watch (Texas), co-founder Code Pink

Daphne Wysham, Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies

Organizations listed for identification purposes only

Write to us via email: usajointheworld@igc.org or call 1-973-338-5398 to sign on or find out more information.

fastingforourfuture.org

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[Editor's note: If you see my name above, you'll see Diane Ladd the actress is on top of me. It's nice to be in good company and to see celebrities give their names to a great cause such as our common survival!]

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Fasting for the climate and self, by Jan Lundberg, Culture Change Letter #166, Sept. 12, 2007:

culturechange.org

Fasting for healing and inner peace, by Jan Lundberg, Apr 7, 2005:

culturechange.org