



Climate Solutions for Coral Reefs

The Climate Stewardship Act Protects Coral Reefs Around the World

Coral reefs inspire the imagination and fill us with wonder. They are home to more than one-quarter of all marine wildlife species. They also provide numerous benefits to people; they form the foundation for multi-billion dollar fishing and tourism industries worldwide and protect coasts from storm damage. Unfortunately, these glorious ecosystems are under siege by human activities, and there is growing evidence that global warming and associated climate change has joined pollution, over-fishing, and other stressors as perhaps the greatest threat to the survival of coral reefs in the coming decades.

From the National Academy of Sciences to official reports issued by the Bush Administration, scientists agree that global warming is a reality today. Temperatures have already increased by an average of one degree over the past century.

Global Warming's Effect on Coral Reefs:

Scientists predict the changes we experience this century could be as much as ten times more severe as more and more carbon pollution is pumped into the atmosphere from smokestacks and tailpipes.



- ✘ Studies show that warmer-than-normal sea temperatures are contributing to coral bleaching, which has been on the rise in recent years, weakening and killing reefs in many parts of the world.
- ✘ Sea level rise caused by melting sea ice and thermal expansion of the oceans could also cause problems for some reefs by making them too deep to receive adequate sunlight, another factor important for survival.
- ✘ Higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are changing the chemistry of the oceans, making it more difficult for corals to build up calcium carbonate skeletons

The plight of coral reefs sends an important signal that our oceans' ecosystems are being pushed too far and provides a glimpse into what the future may hold for other ecosystems if we don't take action.

But the good news is . . .

Momentum is building in both the House of Representatives and the Senate for a bipartisan national plan for action to begin solving global warming – **The Climate Stewardship Act**.

The Climate Stewardship Act would take a first step in dealing with the environmental threat of global warming by requiring industry to control the amount of pollution that they emit to the atmosphere.

Analyses show that this middle-ground approach would create more than 800,000 jobs nationwide by 2025.

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The goals of the Act are modest, but it is important to get started now. The pollution we emit now will linger in the atmosphere for decades, making the problem harder to solve if

- ✓ **Mandatory reductions:** The Act requires power plants, oil companies and factories to collectively reduce their emissions to what they emitted in the year 2000, and it gives them until 2010 to do it.
- ✓ **Balanced, flexible approach:** The Act has won support from industry, farmers, and conservation groups. Companies that recognize the need to reduce pollution support the innovative way the Act allows businesses to devise their own solutions to meet the national emissions goals.
- ✓ **Protects the environment:** Global warming poses a wide range of threats to public health, to our local fish and wildlife resources, and to the wild places that define America's unique landscapes. Scientists predict that up to one-third of species in many regions of the world could be headed toward extinction by 2050 due to global warming if we fail to take



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