



Climate Change: By the Numbers

- **192 million:** metric tons of CO₂ sequestered each year by forests in the USA, according to a new study released by the US Forest Service. This carbon sink amounts to 11% of all US industrial GHG emissions. The rate at which our forests store CO₂ may be in jeopardy for the future, as warming temperatures, disease, and pest attacks threaten large portions of US forestland. [Learn more!](#)
- **500 million:** barrels of oil that will be saved as a result of new EPA regulations to improve fuel efficiency of medium and heavy-duty vehicles. The new standards will go into effect for vehicles sold from 2014 to 2018. [Read more here!](#)
- **34%:** decrease in Brazil's national GHG emissions from 2004 to 2009, a dramatic decrease made possible by sharply reducing deforestation in the Amazon. [Learn more!](#)

A new landscape for climate politics?

Welcome to the November 2010 edition of the ClearSky Climate Solutions Newsletter. This quarterly bulletin is designed to help keep you informed of the latest action at ClearSky as well as provide important climate change news from the USA and around the world.

Recent Happenings at ClearSky:

As the trees shed their last leaves and the mountains huddle under a blanket of new snow, ClearSky is also transitioning from a very busy Autumn. Voters across the nation



cast their ballots this past Tuesday, and many of the decisions we made as a country will have a large impact on climate change issues (read more in the pages that follow). ClearSky devoted most of the fall to projects with [Pact](#) (an international sustainable development NGO) on their [REDD+ Signature Initiative](#). We learned a lot in the process, and we're looking forward to Pact's next steps.

Here's a brief rundown of other ClearSky activities from this past fall:

- Advancing to the final round of the award process for USAID's Indonesia Forestry and Climate Support (IFACS) Program (final decision expected in just a few weeks!);
- Participating in [Climate Ride California](#), a 320-mile bike trip along the Pacific coast to raise awareness on climate change issues;
- Being short-listed to provide carbon offsets for a multinational commercial real estate firm, [CB Richard Ellis](#);
- Submitting a proposal to conduct a Greenhouse Gas Assessment for the [ClimateWorks Foundation](#);
- Completing Greenhouse Gas Assessments for the [Urban Cuisine Tour](#), as well as [Renewed Materials, LLC](#) for their exhibit at [Greenbuild 2010](#).

As always, you can keep up with ClearSky at our [News Page](#) online!

Climate Change: By the Numbers – Cont.

- **3,500:** acres of BLM land in California that will be covered with fields of solar mirrors, as part of the world's largest solar thermal facility. The Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System will produce enough power for roughly 140,000 homes. This is just one of 3 large facilities approved with recent months. [See more!](#)
- **188:** countries around the world where events took place as part of the "10/10/10 Global Work Party" organized by [350.org](#). There were over 7,300 events around the world, ranging from planting trees to installing solar panels.
- **39%:** current capacity level within Lake Mead. An 11-year drought in the Western US has reduced flows of the Colorado River, leaving officials wondering how much longer Hoover Dam will be able to produce electricity. [Read more here.](#)
- **2050:** year that Denmark will be completely weaned from fossil fuels, according to a report released by the Danish government. The Danes will rely heavily on wind energy and biomass fuel – [read more about their ambitious plans!](#)

Climate Change in the News

Click on the headlines and links below to get the full story

[2010 Elections muddy the waters for climate change issues](#)

With most of the recent [US election races](#) settled, it appears that the Democratic party will maintain a slim lead in the US Senate, with the Republican party taking a sizeable lead in the US House of Representatives. So what is the outlook for advancing climate change legislation in a split congress? It depends who you ask. [Comprehensive climate change legislation appears out of reach within the near future](#), judging by the reactions of President



Obama and the new leaders of congress. The effort to handcuff the EPA and undo other federal actions to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will likely occupy more time in the courtroom, [as a recent study suggests](#). Then again, the president appears to still be committed to moving through climate policies in a piece-by-piece fashion, and certainly there are legislators who remain committed to the cause. Working on a few issues that are more open to political compromise – home weatherization and energy efficiency, for example - might be a good first step. Additionally, the 2010 elections did yield a few bring spots related to climate change. Voters in [California](#) rejected an effort led by oil companies to roll back the state's climate change regulations, and [New Mexico](#) enacted new rules on GHG regulations. This is a serious boost to the [Western Climate Initiative](#), a regional effort among US states, Mexican states, and Canadian provinces to establish a carbon market to control GHG emissions. In the remainder of 2010, we will see if any pieces of legislation emerge from the lame-duck congress.

[Funding for congressional climate skeptics comes from overseas](#)

In the category of "painful but unsurprising" news, we have a recent report detailing the campaign contributions of European companies to US legislators. Senators Jim Inhofe (R-OK) and Jim DeMint (R-SC), two of the most strident climate change deniers in congress, are mentioned specifically as receiving large contributions from major polluters like BP, BASF, and Lafarge. It seems that [European companies are heavily supporting members of congress who are likely to impede climate change legislation](#). This is a natural outcome of the January 2010 [US Supreme Court ruling](#) to roll back campaign contribution limits for corporations. Critics of the ruling predicted that it would prompt a wave of unregulated and untraceable funding to politicians, and we will be allowing this sort of outside influence in our politics until new campaign finance rules are in place.

Required Reading

[Climate Vulnerability Map](#)

India and Bangladesh are the two countries most at risk from global climate change, according to a new study released by the consulting firm [Maplecroft](#). They report on the environmental and social implications of climate change that pose risks to countries around the world, and provide a clear map of expected climate risk. We like it because it's a clear way to visualize the distribution of climate change impacts around the world. It also provides some interesting food for thought, combined with the study mentioned at the bottom of this page.

[CO2 Emissions from Fuel Combustion](#)

This new report from the [International Energy Agency](#) is chock full of the most recent data on GHG emissions around the globe, with estimates of CO₂ emissions by country from 1971 through 2008. It also has more in-depth indicators, like CO₂ emissions per capita and per unit of GDP. A great resource for publications and pub trivia nights!

Climate Change in the News – Cont'd

[Personal carbon cards?](#)

Tiny [Norfolk Island](#) in the Pacific Ocean is acting as a testing ground for a unique new system to incentivize carbon-friendly lifestyles. The Australian Research Council awarded a grant to researchers at Southern Cross University to set up a pilot program that applies carbon trading to the individual level. Basically, the system works like a small-scale “cap and trade” scheme – participants receive a credit card with a fixed allocation of carbon units, which are deducted every time they purchase gas, power, and other carbon-heavy commodities. If they have leftover carbon units at the end of the test period, they can trade them in for cash. We don't expect to see carbon cards being issued in this country in the near future, but the test program will be a neat way to see how people respond to incentives at the personal level.



[Environmentalists, meet your new teammates: the Climate Hawks](#)

Rather than being down in the dumps about recent election results, one thing that climate change advocates can do is try to gain some insights from the failures we've experienced in the past year. [It's safe to say that climate change was not the decisive issue in this election](#), as Democratic supporters of the 2009 ACES bill fared as well or better than their party counterparts who opposed the bill. It's clear that there is still broad support among voters and politicians for clean energy, and this fact may lead to some positive breakthroughs in the next year or two. “[Climate Hawks](#),” or supporters of clean energy and climate change, may turn out to be a substantial and influential group among decision-makers. Think it over – would you join the Climate Hawk team, and is this a positive way to build consensus?

[Developing countries going to court over climate change](#)

Small and developing countries are growing increasingly frustrated with the climate change issue. Simply put, a few rich nations created the problem, and now many poor nations are set to bear the brunt of the consequences. The pleas of developing countries have grown increasingly poignant over the past 2 years – remember [underwater cabinet meetings in the Maldives](#), [record flooding in Pakistan](#), and [mudslides in China](#)? Well, a new study from the Foundation for International Law and Development (FIELD) says that vulnerable countries might have an outlet to take legal action against developed nations, through the United Nations International Court of Justice. It's an interesting concept, which raises several interesting questions. For example - who exactly should the Maldives sue, and how would they demonstrate they've been wronged? What sort of compensation would be fair? [Read more!](#)

Closing Credits

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Featured Partner

ClearSky would like to recognize the work of our featured partner, [Emerald Events and Weddings!](#) Emerald Events plans eco-friendly events of all kinds. The founder of Emerald Events, Melissa Wagner, is taking her knowledge on the road in 2011 with the [Emerald Certified Seminars](#) tour, which is focused on teaching event planners all over the USA how to incorporate environmentally friendly elements into their work. ClearSky is helping to make the Emerald Certified Seminars tour totally climate neutral, and we're teaching people about carbon offsets along the way.



A view from the field

This issue's featured photo is from the Climate Ride California, where Keegan Eisenstadt and Devin Trainor (ClearSky's CEO and Intern, respectively) pedaled 320 miles along the coast into San Francisco to raise money and awareness for climate change advocacy groups. Go team ClearSky!



Looking back

If you'd like to access any of the previous ClearSky E-Newsletters, you can find them all at our website:

www.clearskyclimatesolutions.com/newsletter.html

Looking ahead

If there's a topic or question you'd like to see us cover in one of our newsletters, just let us know! You can reach us by email at:

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Thanks for reading, and stay tuned for the next ClearSky E-Newsletter!