

Hosting a Global Warming Solutions Party

Thank you for agreeing to host a Maryland Global Warming Solutions party to raise awareness about global warming! We need to get back to the basics and help raise awareness about the importance of enacting state legislation to make an enforceable commitment to science-based reductions of global warming pollutants. We hope that this manual will give you everything you need to have a fun and successful party, and give you the chance to empower your friends and neighbors to work towards solutions to this problem. If you ever have any questions, please feel free to email us at holly@chesapeakeclimate.org or call 301-891-6833.

Why Host a House Party?

Every year, the imminent threat of global warming hovers over us. Every year, new studies document melting ice-caps, rises in sea level, increases in severe storms. Every year, we dig ourselves deeper and deeper into a hole. Our dependence on oil has crossed the line from an environmental issue to an issue of national security as our military is dispatched to protect our overseas oil interest.

Maryland is facing a climate crisis from global warming; with over 3,100 miles of coastline, Maryland is one of the most vulnerable states in the nation to the effects of sea level rise. Even small changes in sea level will be devastating to the Chesapeake Bay, and scientists predict 2 feet sea level rise in next century. The good news is, we already have the science available to achieve real reductions in global warming pollutants. If enacted soon, legislation setting enforceable reductions on these pollutants would help us avoid the worst impacts of global warming.

HELP EDUCATE

The goal of these house parties is to build awareness about how global warming affects Virginia, Maryland, and DC, and what we can do about it. Unfortunately, many people are still unaware of the realities of global warming in our region. Furthermore, few people feel empowered to take personal and political steps to combat this issue. We do not have to sacrifice our natural heritage, harm human health, and further global warming to meet America's energy needs. Solutions exist to clean up our emissions across the board and we have a responsibility to ourselves, to our children, and to the rest of the world to demand action now!

There are several ways to go about educating your guests. One option is to include a film screening in your party; we can provide you with a copy of "*We are all Smith Islanders*" if that is what you choose to do. You could also consider inviting someone to speak about this issue, or highlighting changes you have made in your own home to help combat global warming.

ORGANIZE

People are sick and tired of sitting back and watching the White House dismantle our environmental laws as Maryland's government sits idly by. The first step is to educate your friends and family. Similar meetings are happening across the region. The citizens' movement is building and soon we will be a force to be reckoned with.

BE POLITICAL:

Invite you representatives! (find yours at <http://mdelect.net/electedofficials/>)

We must send a strong signal to our state politicians that we want action to reduce our emissions, and we want it now. The technology is there, the rest of the world is moving, and we must act now!

RECRUIT MEMBERS TO CCAN:

An important aspect of throwing a house party is recruiting new members to join CCAN, and to help fund CCAN's efforts in taking steps to fight global warming.

Preparing for your House Party

Step 1: Get Your Materials

Unlike most parties, there are a few things you will need for this house party that you can't just run out to the store and pick up 5 minutes before your guests arrive. You should receive a packet from us before your party containing the following:

- A set of draft letters to send to your state politicians, focusing on Governor O'Malley
- Fact sheets and brochures on the Maryland Global Warming Solutions Act
- Copies of the CCAN Community Activist Guide for interested volunteers
- CCAN membership forms
- CCAN membership packets
- CCAN buttons
- A copy of "*We are all Smith Islanders*" if desired

In addition to these materials, you will need a few other things:

- Pens, paper, envelopes and stamps for writing to Governor O'Malley
- Refreshments, if you choose to serve them at your party.
- Name tags and sign-in sheets
- Enough places for everyone to sit. If you need extra chairs, you can ask some of your friends to bring folding chairs.
- A digital camera to record the party for posterity.

If you plan on hosting a guest speaker, make sure you talk to them about the event!

Step 2: Set the Date and Time

Choose a time that will maximize the number of people who can attend, while avoiding rush hour, possible sports games, or other traffic conflicts.

Step 3: Invitations

Once you have set the date and time for your house party, you are ready to invite your guests. It is up to you to decide how many people you feel comfortable having at your home. In addition to inviting your friends and family, email Holly at holly@chesapeakeclimate.org, who will send it out to the CCAN list. You may also want to use a free online invitation service like evite, <http://www.evite.com>. Whichever method you prefer, using a format which recipients can easily forward to other interested parties to spread the word.

An invitation should include the following:

- An explanation for why fighting global warming is important to you
- An indication that people will be asked for money. "Bring your checkbook" is the most direct way to make this known. You might also say, "...a chance to learn about CCAN and contribute to their important work."
- A way for people to join CCAN without coming to the party. If it's an email, link to https://secure.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizations/CCAN/shop/custom.jsp?donate_page_KE_Y=2475, or send them a membership brochure in your invitation.
- A suggestion that people to bring friends. (make sure people know to rsvp!)
- Clear directions to the house and a phone number.

Step 4: Calling Your Friends to Invite Them

In addition to sending e-mails to your guests, calling your friends to invite them is easy – and important. Just tell them you're throwing a party, why, and ask them to join you. Some people will be able to come, and some won't, and that's fine. If you want, you can ask people who are particularly enthusiastic to help out with the party by providing refreshments or helping to lead the discussion. Be sure to ask everyone to bring along their friends and family – just asking will increase the number of people at your party by one third or more!

Step 5: Advertise outside your circle of friends

There may be many concerned citizens in your area. Send a small notice to the local paper (they will almost certainly print it). Post to community list-serves. Make a flyer and put it up at the community center, in church, and around town, or hand out to friends in public. You may also want to invite people from other advocacy groups or advertise at other community events.

Party Timeline

The Week Before (1 week ahead of time)

Step 1: Confirm Your Guest List

It's a good idea to call through your expected guest list a week before your house party to confirm attendance. This way you will have a better estimate of how many people to expect and what materials you will need.

Step 2: Print Out Your Materials

When you have a good idea of the number of guests you are expecting, you will need to print out enough copies of your materials for everyone.

Sign-In Sheet – Print out enough sign-in sheets to collect names and contact information for all your guests. It always helps to have an extra.

Draft letters to Governor O'Malley – We have a goal of generating more than **500** letters from community members by mid-November, when the Maryland Commission on Climate Change draft report is due. But even if you have your party later, we still want letters reaching to governor, showing how important this issue is to citizens of Maryland. Every letter counts!

Envelopes, Stamps, and Pens – Make sure you have enough mailing materials and pens for everyone you expect. Again, extras are always useful.

A few copies of this house party guide – If someone is really excited, you should have a copy of this guide on-hand so you can simply give them a copy, and set up a date for their own community meeting on the spot! We cannot stop with just one meeting. Every meeting should lead to another (if not a few)!

Step 3: Make Sure Your Technology Works

So it's the day of your party, your guests have arrived, everyone is having fun, you go to put in the "We are All Smith Islanders" DVD and the screen is blank. That's probably the worst case scenario for these house parties. A few days before hand, make sure that the DVD works with your system—we recommend playing it all the way through at least once—and that all your guests will be able to see the screen. If you find out that your DVD is not working, email us at info@chesapeakeclimate.org or call 301-891-6726 and we will send you a new DVD.

Step 4: Plan Your Agenda

It's important to plan the party ahead of time, so that you can make sure to cover all of the points you wish to make – the importance of the Global Warming Solutions Act, encouragement for others to join CCAN, what people can do to fight global warming, and whatever else you wish to cover.

Step 5: Send Out Press Advisory

Getting a story about your house party in a local newspaper or on local TV news is a great way to reach a much broader audience about the need for Global Warming Solutions in Maryland. If you are willing to invite local reporters to your house party, please send out a press advisory. Be sure to include all the relevant local information. You can fax or email the advisory to members of the media a few days in advance, and then call them the next day to see if they are interested in attending or learning more. If you want more guidance about approaching the media, or they want more information, please call 301-891-6833 or e-mail holly@chesapeakeclimate.org.

Follow up (the day after the party)

Step 1: Send us your Sign-In Sheet & Photos

Please let us know who came to your event.

- Type up the contact information you obtained and email it to holly@chesapeakeclimate.org
OR
- Mail us a copy your sign-in sheets from the house party to
 - Chesapeake Climate Action Network
 - PO Box 11138
 - Takoma Park, MD 20912

Step 2: Send in the Letters to the Governor

Once you have collected all of the letters, you want to send them into your state representatives at the address you find online.

Step 3: Follow Up Phone Call to your representatives or the Governor

Please also encourage your house party participants to call their state representatives or Governor O'Malley as well. A staff member will answer the phone and pass the message on to the elected representative. It is important to state clearly and respectfully that you are a constituent of their district and that you vote. Tell the staff member about your concerns surrounding global warming and the need for enforceable science-based reductions on global warming pollutants.