

## Crucial FEWSION Episode 8 – Extra: Think Global, Act Local

### Personal Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Transcript – 20 Aug 2021

**Diane Hope:** What about things that we can do in our everyday lives to reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, right now?

**Kevin Gurney:** Yeah, I mean there's a ton of things we can do. In our everyday lives we can do a few things. We can consider riding a bike instead of driving our car, or walking, when that's possible. We can change our food consumption – we know now that meat-based diets tend to be a little more CO<sub>2</sub> emitting or methane emitting than plant-based diets. So, just tipping the balance a little more towards vegetable-based diets away from meat-based diets would help.

The amount of energy you consume in your home. We use a lot of energy now that we think is convenient, but it turns out some of it really isn't that convenient. I mean we have lots of devices in our homes that we leave on – these are called 'vampire' electrical devices. So, for example your television is always in stand-by mode, and actually its consuming energy even when it's not technically on. By having a plug strip or something like that, you can keep those devices off until you absolutely need them.

Consider better insulation in your home to lower the amount of heating and air conditioning you need in the winter and the summer. Clothes drying – there's been a movement across many states in the United States, because HOA's actually outlawed a lot of outdoor clothes lines back in the 80s and 90s – and there's now been a movement to try and overturn a lot of those provisions because it just seems like an utter waste not to utilize line drying. And in fact, line drying can help lower the amount of humidity in your home because when you dry clothes you generate mold, from all the humidity the dryer generates inside your house. And of course, it uses electricity or natural gas. And you end up with a better result – you actually get a better smelling, cleaner because you have uv (ultra violet) light hitting your clothing with remove a lot of bacterial growth in clothes fibres.

**DH:** So once and for all we can nix this idea that drying clothes outside is dirty ...

**KG:** Exactly! I think this is an image that people have in their minds from city tenement buildings with clothes lines strung between the buildings.

We had to overturn a rule in our HOA here in Flagstaff – which they did without a lot of resistance. Once we raised the issue and explained why we wanted to do it, they were onboard with it. They changes the rules, now everybody can have a clothes line in our neighborhood. As long as we do it with some reasonable protections against overly visual clothes lines. Its not a problem. If we have just a state-wide rule, which some states do – then you'd sort of blanket all HOAs and stop them from eliminating line drying.

**DH:** Anything else?

**KG:** Well one thing I'd say is .. you know, general consumption. We think of greenhouse gas emissions as when we burn fuel to heat a building or to drive our car. But remember – every single thing we buy generates emissions somewhere on the planet. These days its mostly across the ocean – since a lot of manufactured goods are now being made in Mexico, being made in China, etcetera etcetera. But – those places are experiencing emissions and its one planet. So, the emissions are the same as if they were here and so we can also think about our consumption. I'm a consumer, I like all the good stuff that I buy, but I think that there's certainly lots of room for discussion about just

lowering the amount of consumption. Thinking about do we really need half of the things that we purchase. There's a lot of gratuitous consumption in the United States that's just born out of the fact that we're so wealthy. But we don't think about it that way – because the linkage is somewhere else. We don't see it.

The last thing I'll say about reducing emissions is people need to be politically active on the issue. That's another really important thing that everyone can do – other than trying to improve the emissions in their personal life, is trying to convince local, state and the federal government to just take more action. It HAS to be a partnership between citizens in their private lives and the political instruments of power. We need BOTH to solve the problem. One alone won't do it. The government alone won't do it. And just citizens along can't do it. Just because of the complications of supply and demand. We need both. And that means that electing representatives that place climate change on their top five or top ten things of what they want to tackle becomes really important.

And trying to push back against the kind of anti-science that we see in a lot of the political dialogue in the US – becomes really important.