

Personal Consumption Action Plan for February – Reduce Energy Use Kathryn Hazel, Environmental Justice Committee

Reducing your energy use not only has benefits for the planet, but for your bank account, too. There are many small actions you can take that will add up to big savings, according to BC Hydro.

First, take shorter showers. Even if just two people in your household shorten their time in the shower by one minute each, that could save you \$30 annually. Unplugging your electronics when you're not using them can save up to \$50 a year.

The energy reduction actions that have had the biggest effect on lowering my hydro bill have been drying my laundry outside on an umbrella dryer from April through September, skipping the heat-dry cycle on my dishwasher, and lowering my thermostat by one degree.

I love the smell of clothes hung out to dry in the sunshine, and I find letting my dishes air-dry in the dishwasher actually does a better job of drying them. And putting on a sweater and drinking a hot cup of tea is much more comforting on cold days than cranking up the heat!

If you really want to reduce your carbon footprint in a big way, though, don't take long-haul plane trips, unless it's absolutely necessary. I haven't taken a long-haul flight in six years. If you have to fly, be wary of carbon offsets, and choose airlines that use biofuel. Or better yet, donate to a climate action group as compensation for the environmental cost of flying.

Buying an electric vehicle is another way you can significantly lower your personal carbon footprint. Although EVs are more expensive than gasoline-fueled cars now, prices are expected to drop significantly in the next few years. And even if you buy one now, you will save significantly on maintenance and repairs, as well as the cost of gas, which is predicted to rise to \$2 a litre by this summer.

These are just some of the ways you can cut your energy consumption. There are many others, from cutting out red meat from your diet, buying locally-sourced food, purchasing second-hand items rather than new, walking, cycling, or taking public transit.

It all adds up, and if enough of us do it, we can have a significant effect.

BC Hydro link:

https://www.bchydro.com/powersmart/residential/tips-technologies/everyday-electricity-saving-tips.html?utm_source=direct&utm_medium=redirect&utm_content=21tips

We Are Project Zero (a UK-based group working to save the oceans, it has a comprehensive list of actions that can be taken):

<https://weareprojectzero.org/pz-be-the-change>

And Greenpeace's take on the value of carbon offsets for flying:

<https://youtu.be/d-PCLVUH6IE>