

# Carbon Tithing Program Draft Plan

There is widespread agreement among activists working to stem the climate-disrupting flood of human-produced carbon into the atmosphere that the imposition of escalating taxes on carbon emissions is an essential incentive for moving economies towards non-polluting renewable energy sources.

Recognizing that political realities make the general imposition of such a carbon tax unlikely anytime in the foreseeable future, however, the Peace and Social Concerns Working Group of the Port Townsend Friends Meeting has felt a calling for individual and corporate action to give witness to our belief that carbon polluters, a category which includes almost everyone, bear a moral responsibility to pay for the damage done by our behavior and to help fund a transition to safe and clean technologies.

For this reason, we propose to create and promulgate a Carbon Tithing Program (CTP) that will amount to such a tax, self-imposed, the proceeds from which will be dedicated to the creation of new, non-polluting energy sources and/or the repair of damage already done under the existing system.

Aside from the direct benefits that might be expected to accrue from such a program (funding for a solar array on the Meeting House roof, for example), the CTP is conceived to serve as a model for other groups and as a method for members of our meeting and others to give living witness to their beliefs.

Elements of the CTP as currently conceived are:

- Members and attenders of the meeting will be asked to declare the amount of their tithe to an administrative body appointed by the meeting. Using the advise that a “tithe” literally means a tenth part for guidance, participants in the program will be free to declare what level they feel comfortable with, whether it be a dime a gallon (a level that is standard for a similar program at the Strawberry Creek Meeting in Berkeley, CA) or a dollar-for-dollar match for all fossil fuel expenditures.
- An online carbon footprint calculator such as the one currently in use by the Port Townsend Taming Bigfoot competition will be provided. Using the carbon footprint calculator, participants will be asked to pay their tithe monthly, as with any other bill.
- Although the amount each participant is tithing will be held in the strictest confidence, the total monthly collections and the number of participants in the program will be published on the meeting’s website, along with stories about actions participants have taken to lower their carbon footprints, as a means to inspire others.
- A portion of all proceeds (25%?) from the local CTP will go towards promoting the creation of similar programs at other meetings and congregations across the land, perhaps through Quaker Earthcare Witness, Commit2Respond, 350.org, or some combination of these or other organizations. Ultimately, the goal is to fund a national or international Carbon Tithing apparatus and website that will serve both to publicize CTPs and help spread them.