

RECOMMENDATIONS



Action

4. Offset Your Unavoidable Carbon Emissions

“We have developed a covenant which calls on us to reduce our carbon footprint and calls on the Episcopal Diocese of the Southern Philippines to increase their efforts in tree planting.”

—Bishop Greg Rickel, 2012

Recommendation: We recommend that congregations collectively or members individually offset their unavoidable carbon emissions by donating to designated and vetted carbon offset funds and ministries.

Background: Carbon offsets are essentially trades between carbon emissions in one place in favor of cutting back elsewhere, the goal being carbon neutrality. If you need to fly on a plane, for example, you can neutralize the carbon your flight emits by

purchasing an equivalent carbon offset. Your offset purchase might fund the planting of a tree or the capturing of emissions from a landfill. When carbon offsets are purchased, others are being indirectly compensated for performing the service of removing your unavoidable carbon pollution from the atmosphere.

Taking Action: Carbon offset programs should only be utilized after first reducing carbon footprints as much as possible. Consider these steps as a guide:

- **Measure** your carbon footprint using the carbon tracker tool at www.sustainislandhome.org. Then take the following steps.
- **Reduce** your footprint as much as possible by taking actions suggested by the carbon tracker.
- **Offset** your unavoidable carbon footprint by making a financial contribution to a carbon offset fund.

Consider these carbon offset funds:

- [The Carbon Offset Cooperative Mission](#) is a reforestation partnership between the Diocese of Olympia and the Diocese of Southern Philippines.
- Another very effective carbon offset program, is [Carbon Offsets to Alleviate Poverty \(COTAP\)](#), which pays farmers in developing countries for planting and maintaining trees that capture and store CO₂. COTAP focuses on certified forestry projects in least-developed countries that create life-changing income for the world's poorest people. COTAP is a U.S.-based, 501(c)(3) organization.

A financial contribution to either of these organizations will also be a tax-deductible gift. There are many offset programs available that could also be considered. We recommend researching to ensure their approaches are valid and effective.

Results: Carbon offsets allow us to reduce our impact now while helping those impacted by our historical fossil fuel use.