



People • Service • Environment  
 NORCAL WASTE SYSTEMS OF SAN BENITO COUNTY  
 Proud to Be Employee Owned

# The Connection

KEEPING US CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Summer 2007

## CLIMATE CHANGE – WHAT’S ALL THE GREENHOUSE GAS ABOUT?

**Climate change** is a term scientists have given to the apparent rapid increase in global temperatures. This increase in temperature is believed to be caused by the exponential increase in the use of fossil fuels we use to make gasoline and to produce electricity.

When we extract these fossil fuels and use machines or equipment that burn gasoline or electricity it produces chemicals, known as **greenhouse gases (GHG)**, such as carbon dioxide and methane that trap heat in the earth’s atmosphere. When the heat is trapped temperatures rise which causes all sorts of changes to plant and animal life at a faster pace than we have seen historically.

## Did you know there was a link between solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions?

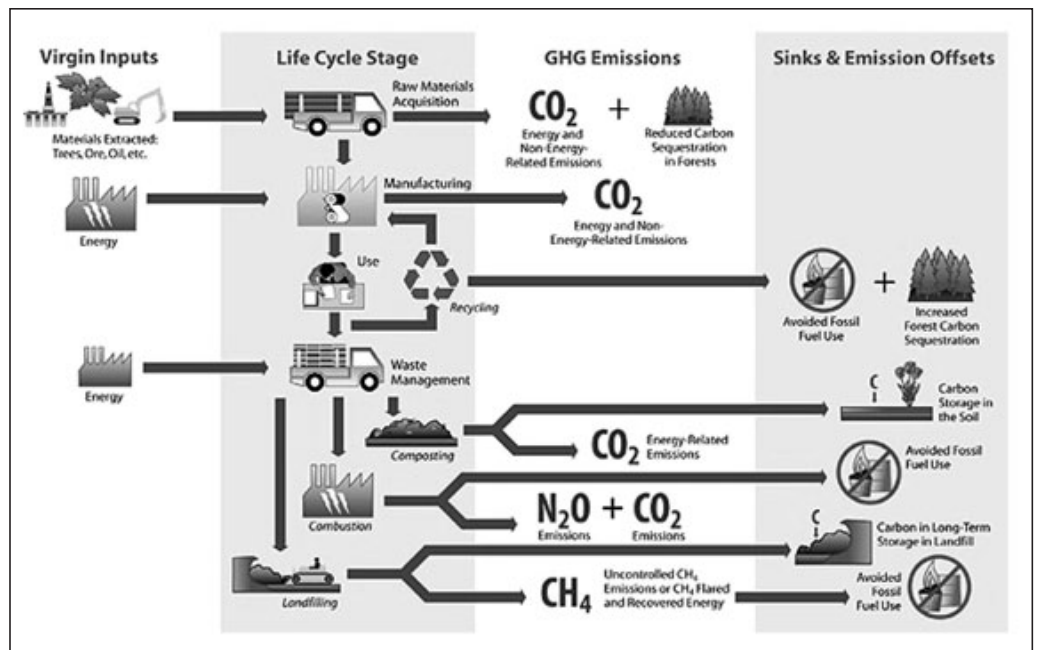
The disposal of solid waste produces greenhouse gas emissions in a number of ways.

- The anaerobic decomposition of waste in landfills produces methane (which is more potent than carbon dioxide).
- The incineration of waste produces carbon dioxide as a by-product.
- The transportation of waste to disposal sites produces greenhouse gas emissions from the combustion of fuel used in the equipment.
- The disposal of materials indicates that they are being replaced by new products; this production often requires the use of fossil fuels to obtain raw materials and manufacture the items.

*(The above information is from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA))*

The image on the right illustrates the four main stages of product life-cycles, all of which provide opportunities for GHG emissions and/or offsets. These stages are: raw material acquisition, manufacturing, recycling, and waste management.

*(The chart is from the EPA)*



### Did you know?

In 2005, EPA estimates that the United States recycled 32.1% of its garbage (79 million tons of material).

# Simple Things YOU can do to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

1. Drive less - 15 miles less driving per week eliminates 900 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.



2. Tune up - clean oil and properly inflated tires eliminates 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.



3. Drive smart - a hybrid of electric vehicle eliminates up to 5,600 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

4. Light up - replace three incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs in your home and eliminate 300 pounds of carbon dioxide.



5. Recycle- recycling half the aluminum, glass, plastic and paper that you use reduces 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide.



6. Purchase solar power- and take advantage of federal tax credits or state rebate programs. Doing so will prevent 2,300 pounds of carbon dioxide or more from entering the atmosphere.

7. Turn it down, turn it up- turn your heater down (in the winter) and your air conditioner up (in the summer) by three degrees and save 1,050 pounds of carbon dioxide.
8. Wash cool- do two loads of your laundry per week in cold or warm water instead of hot water (and hang cloths out to air dry when you can), save 500 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.
9. Store smartly, save money- buy energy star refrigerators and other appliances and save money as well as 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.
10. Sign up- support Global Green USA and support climate change initiatives.

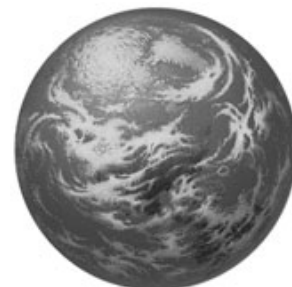
Source: EPA-[www.epa.gov/climatechange.com](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange.com) (above list of 10)


## ***Did you know?***

Current national recycling efforts reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 49.9 million metric tons of carbon equivalent, which is equivalent to the annual GHG emissions from 39.6 million passenger cars.

## **Here's what San Benito County has already done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through recycling 2,390 tons in 2006:**

- Less greenhouse gases were generated, equal to removing 966 cars from the road.
- 11,510 fewer trees were cut down to make paper products.
- Air emissions were reduced by 1,950 tons of carbon dioxide.
- A 132-ton reduction of carbon monoxide, methane, nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, and other emissions.



REMEMBER:  Recycling is one of the major ways you can make a big difference in reducing the affect of climate change.

### **Need more information? Contact us**

NORCAL WASTE SYSTEMS OF SAN BENITO COUNTY

831-636-7500

We value your opinion, questions or comments.

Visit our website at

[www.norcalwastesystemsofsanbenito.com](http://www.norcalwastesystemsofsanbenito.com)

### ***Did you know?***

U.S. recycling activity conserves significant quantities of energy. EPA estimates that our current recycling efforts saves 1.4 quadrillion BTU, equivalent to 11.3 billion gallons of gas.

### **Other Important Resources**

County of San Benito

Integrated Waste Management Department

831-636-4110

