GO ZERO℠ : OFFSET YOUR CARBON EMISSIONS

Through this highly popular program, EnergyUSA customers can choose to offset the carbon dioxide ($C0_2$) emissions that result from their natural gas use by adding a contribution of $0.25 per dekatherm to their monthly bill. EnergyUSA passes 100% of those donations on to The Conservation Fund's Go Zero℠ carbon sequestration program.

The Conservation Fund's Go Zero℠ program makes it simple for individuals, corporations, or even entire communities to measure their $C0_2$ emissions and then offset those emissions by planting trees.

PLANTING TREES ON YOUR BEHALF

Go Zero℠ with EnergyUSA
Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

Through the Go Zero℠ carbon sequestration program, all customers' contributions directly support an effort to address climate change. How? By planting trees. Native trees and forests help fight climate change. As they grow, trees absorb $C0_2$ from the atmosphere and convert it into oxygen. (Did you know that $C0_2$ is one of the most potent greenhouse gases?) In addition to trapping the dangerous gases that cause climate change, these new forests help to protect water quality, restore wildlife habitat, and enhance public recreation areas.

The process of trapping carbon in forests, soils, geological formations, and other carbon "sinks" is called **carbon sequestration**. The majority of these trees are planted and monitored by Environmental-Synergy, Inc. (www.environmental-synergy.com), a group of leading scientists who specialize in reforestation and carbon sequestration; and Environmental Resources Trust, a non-profit organization committed to improving the global environment (www.ert.net).

WHY GO ZERO℠ ?

The World Bank estimates that 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions are caused by deforestation. Estimates are that as much as 50% of the increase in atmospheric $C0_2$ over the last 50 years may be due to the effects of changing land use patterns. In the U.S. alone, we lose more than two million acres of forests, farmland, and natural landscapes each year to development. And in the Lower Mississippi River Valley, more than 20 million acres of native forestland have been cleared in the last century.

While restoring America's forests alone will not stop global warming, given the scale of the effort required to tackle climate change, we need to pursue new technologies that help us reduce our carbon footprint, and at the same time, recognize and use the tools we have at our fingertips.

Since 2000, support from Go Zero℠ donors has enabled restoration of nearly 20,000 acres of forestlands—more than 6 million trees—through its carbon sequestration programs. Over the next 100 years, these new forests will capture an estimated 8 million tons of $C0_2$ from the atmosphere.

WHO IS THE CONSERVATION FUND?

The Conservation Fund is America's foremost environmental nonprofit dedicated to protecting our nation's land and water legacy for current and future generations. Seeking innovative conservation solutions for the 21st century, the Fund works to integrate economic and environmental goals. Since its founding in 1985, the Fund has helped its partners safeguard wildlife habitat, working landscapes, community "greenspace," and historic sites totaling nearly 6 million acres. With 1% fundraising costs and 97% program allocation, The Conservation Fund is recognized as the nation's top rated environmental nonprofit by both the American Institute of Philanthropy and Charity Navigator. For more information, visit www.conservationfund.org.

FAQS

WHO ARE THE FUND'S Go Zero℠ partners?

Partners range from local communities to public agencies to leading companies to committed individuals. For a complete list of partners, visit: http://conservationfund.org/GoZero/partners.

WHERE ARE MY trees planted?

The Conservation Fund is working across the country to plant trees and address climate change. The Go Zero℠ program currently targets areas in National Wildlife Refuges from New Jersey to Texas to South Carolina to Georgia. For the past several years, The Conservation Fund's reforestation efforts have been focused on the Lower Mississippi River Valley—an area that lost more than 20 million acres of bottomland hardwood forest over the last century. This area will remain a core Conservation Fund focus in the years to come. For a list of reforested lands, visit www.conservationfund.org/gozero/faqs.

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WHEN WILL MY trees be planted?

Go Zero℠ trees are combined with existing and future carbon sequestration projects. Typically, the Fund completes three to four carbon sequestration projects each year.

WHAT EXACTLY ARE you measuring?

For natural gas, the U.S. Energy Information Administration has determined that approximately 5.31 kg of $C0_2$ are generated per therm of natural gas (0.05854275 short tons of $C0_2$ per dekatherm). The average American is responsible for emitting approximately 21 tons of $C0_2$ into the atmosphere each year.

HOW MUCH $C0_2$ does one tree absorb?

Sequestration rates vary depending on species of tree and geographic location. In the lower Mississippi River Valley, where most of the Fund's sequestration efforts have been focused, the Fund and its partners plant approximately 300 trees per acre, which will sequester approximately 400 tons of $C0_2$ over 100 years. Therefore, on a per planted tree basis, each tree absorbs an average of approximately 1.33 tons of $C0_2$ over 100 years.

THE TREES THAT ARE PLANTED TAKE A LONG TIME to trap $C0_2$, right? How do we know that the trees will be around then?

Although this process takes longer than some other techniques to address climate change, its results are proven and less expensive than other offset alternatives. Trees sequester $C0_2$ during **every** year of their growth span. The process happens slowly at first, and more rapidly as they mature.

NATURAL GAS EMMISSION FACTORS

U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) Data

FUEL TYPE	bs CO_2 / 1,000 cubic feet	kg CO_2 / 100 cubic feet (CCF)	kg CO_2 / therm
Methane	116.38	5.28	5.13
Flare Gas	133.76	6.07	5.89
Natural Gas	120.59	5.47	5.31

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

WHO ELSE HELPS WITH THE Go Zero℠ program?

The Conservation Fund works primarily with state and federal public land agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These organizations are the long-term land managers and stewards of the Go Zero℠ trees and employ some of the world's top biologists and environmental professionals. These public agency partners also provide third-party validation for the Go Zero℠ program.

CAN FORESTS really make a difference?

Yes. As much as 50% of the increase in $C0_2$ in the atmosphere over the last 50 years may be due to the effects of land use change—primarily developing or razing forestland. While we cannot depend on tree planting alone, restoring forestland is a proven and natural way to trap greenhouse gasses.

WHAT STANDARDS or methods are used?

The Conservation Fund is a leader in carbon sequestration, adhering to the most rigorous environmental and scientific principles. It uses calculation methods and standards set forth by The Greenhouse Gas Protocol Initiative and processes verified by the Environmental Resources Trust.

DO I EARN carbon credits as a result of my donation?

The Go Zero℠ program was created to calculate and offset the annual $C0_2$ emitted by a specific activity, business, organization, or individual. Therefore, all earned 'carbon credits' are retired and cannot be banked for future offset purposes or sold.

DUE TO BUDGET CONSTRAINTS, we cannot participate fully. Are there any other options?

Yes, adding $0.25 per dekatherm to your monthly bill allows you to offset your carbon emissions fully. However, you can choose to participate at alternate levels for a partial offset. For example, if you designate $0.05 per dekatherm, you can offset 20% of your emissions.

WHAT ELSE is EnergyUSA or its parent company, NiSource, doing in partnership with The Conservation Fund?

Both companies are committed to doing business in an environmentally conscious manner. NiSource and its consultants have developed a multi-state Habitat Conservation Plan designed to protect threatened or endangered species across the 15,500-mile NiSource natural gas transmission and storage system, spanning 17 states. The Conservation Fund has been asked to coordinate these conservation activities and assist NiSource in implementing a green approach to managing its infrastructure and assisting in the conservation of species.

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Note: Much of the information presented here has been adapted from The Conservation Fund, www.conservationfund.org. Used with permission.