

Degree of Impact Cards

Degree of Impact ENERGY

Americans constitute less than 5% of the world's population, but are responsible for nearly 20% of the world's annual energy consumption, including one-quarter of fossil fuels.

On average, one American consumes as much energy as:

- 2 Germans,
- 7 Jordanians,
- 9 Colombians,
- 16 Indians,
- 101 Haitians, or
- 174 Ethiopians

Source: Energy Information Agency, US DOE, 2011 data

Degree of Impact WASTE

The more we consume, the more waste we produce. By the time a baby born today in the United States reaches the age of 78 years, he or she will have produced nearly 66 tons of garbage.

The average American generates 4.4 pounds of solid waste each day, compared to the average person in the U.K. (3 pounds) or Japan (2.3 pounds). The average resident of Nepal produces less than 1 pound per day.

Sources: EPA Municipal Solid Waste; OECD Environmental Indicators

Degree of Impact GLOBAL WARMING

In 2011, the United States was responsible for 16% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions.

China, with over four times more people than the United States, now produces more total carbon dioxide, but the U.S. leads in per capita emissions.

Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas, responsible for 60% of global warming caused by greenhouse gases.

Source: Environmental Protection Agency, 2015 data

Degree of Impact WATER USE

A child born in the developed world consumes 30-50 times as much water as one born in the developing world. Meanwhile, 780 million people lack access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion lack access to adequate sanitation.

About 35% of the world's people face chronic water shortages. As the population grows, more water is needed for agriculture, industry and domestic uses. The supply of clean, accessible water is further reduced by pollution.

Sources: UN, UNESCO, WHO

Degree of Impact ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Our "ecological footprint" is a measure of how fast we consume resources and generate waste compared to how fast nature can absorb our waste and generate new resources. Since the 1970's, our demand for resources has exceeded what the Earth can regenerate in a year. It now takes 1 ½ years to regenerate what we use in one year. That means we're borrowing from future generations and not using resources sustainably.

If everyone consumed as Americans do, we'd need the resources of 4 Earths to sustain us.

Source: Global Footprint Network

Degree of Impact LAND USE

Topsoil: Around the world, soil is being swept away 10-40 times faster than it is being replenished, destroying cropland the size of Indiana every year. As a result of soil erosion over the past 40 years, 30% of the world's arable land has become unproductive.

Forests: More than 56,000 square miles of natural forest are lost each year to agriculture, ranching, mining and logging. Less than half of original tropical forests remain. At current rates of deforestation, 5-10% of tropical rainforest species will be lost per decade.

Sources: The Nature Conservancy; David Pimentel, Cornell University