



# Flight Free Press Release and Fact Sheet

January 2020

Flight Free USA is a grassroots climate campaign raising awareness about the impacts of air travel on climate change and inspiring people to significantly reduce their carbon footprint by choosing to not fly. The Flight Free 2020 pledge encourages people to take collective action, to not fly for one year and inspire thousands of others to do the same. For those that are not ready to take the pledge we encourage a flight diet.

## The Flight Free USA mission is to:

- *raise awareness about the impacts of air travel on climate change;*
- *inspire people to significantly reduce their carbon footprint by choosing to not fly;*
- *publicize our collective flight free pledge to call on government and industry to urgently address climate change and reduce worldwide carbon emissions immediately.*

## Why Flight Free?

- **The climate challenge:** To limit warming to [1.5 degrees Celsius](#), it is estimated that everyone on earth would need to have an average annual carbon budget of 1.6 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e from 2018 - 2050.<sup>1</sup> Worldwide carbon emissions must be reduced by 45% by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050 to avoid catastrophic climate change. To get there, global carbon emissions need to drop by double digits this year and next, and years to come. Unfortunately, carbon emissions are steadily on the rise.<sup>2</sup>
- **Our impact:** Americans have the largest per capita carbon footprint in the world, among major global economies with an average of 15.0 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions per person per year.<sup>3</sup>
- **Our solution:** Individuals, institutions, corporations, government, and industry need to stop burning fossil fuels! Flying less is one of the most immediate and powerful ways we personally can reduce our carbon footprint. A round trip flight SF to NYC, produces 1.6 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions *for each passenger* and exceeds the per capita carbon emissions of 24% of the world's population.<sup>4</sup> While airlines are working towards more efficient planes the increase in air travel outpaces improvements in efficiency.<sup>5</sup>
- **Flying is worse for the climate than other carbon emissions.** Depending on different estimations, science tells us that the effect of aircraft on climate is 2 to 4 times larger than the warming caused by the CO<sub>2</sub> alone - this has to do with other combustion bi-products (water vapor, nitrous oxides, sulphate, and soot) released in the sensitive upper troposphere and lower stratosphere which add to the warming effect.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Using data from the [IPCC report SR15](#): 420 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>e/32 years/8.2 billion people=1.6 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year per.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/8-things-you-need-know-about-ipcc-15-c-report>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/each-country-share-co2-emissions>

<sup>4</sup> <http://engaging-data.com/airplane-emissions/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/19/climate/air-travel-emissions.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://stay-grounded.org/infos/impacts-of-aviation/#sdfnote1sym>





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## Quotes:

### FLIGHTS OF PERIL AND PRIVILEGE

*"Minute by minute, mile by mile, nothing that we do causes greater or more easily avoidable harm to the planet than flying."* - Professor Richard Slimbach, Phd, Professor of Global Studies, Azusa Pacific University "Flights of Peril and Privilege"

### A CALL FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

*"Considering the urgency of the climate crisis and the necessity to halt carbon emissions immediately for the sake of safeguarding biodiversity and our ecosystems, there is no need (or time) to attribute blame for climate change or wallow in guilt. At Flight Free 2020 USA, we have a different message: when individuals join together and shun air travel, industry and the government will need to help deliver solutions. This includes more efficient and affordable ground transport and the eventual electrification of air travel. For now, one significant way to feel content with one's environmental impact is to avoid emitting the tons of CO<sub>2</sub> that accompany air travel."* - Katherine Leswing, Flight Free USA East Coast Coordinator

### WORLDWIDE CARBON BUDGET

*"I don't think shame really gets at the issue...according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change we have about 360 gigatons of Carbon Dioxide equivalent left in our carbon "budget" before we reach a point at which we have about a 2/3 chance of avoiding catastrophic runaway global warming (1.5 degrees C global average temperature rise). At 2 degrees C our chances are 50/50. At about 42 gigatons of annual global carbon emissions, we have about 8-10 years left in theory to "bend the curve" and get emissions to zero. Don't you think it would be wiser to use this carbon budget to build a green economy instead of flying to vacation?"*

- Bhima Sheridan, Flight Free USA Country Coordinator

### FLYING IS A PRIVILEGE

*"Flying is an extreme privilege that has been normalised in the last couple of decades for the world's elite. Only about 20% of the world's population has ever been on a plane - and frequent fliers are a small subset of that- but still more than 4.1 billion flights are taken per year and this steals from everyone and every living thing's future on this planet. We need to live, work, and recreate locally as much as possible and stay grounded."*

- Ariella Granett, Flight Free USA Country Coordinator

### Flight Free USA's numbers to date:

- Flight Free USA formed 8/12/19 with volunteers in CA, OR, AZ, CO, MN, MA, NH.
- The Flight Free grassroots campaign started in Sweden and is now being run by volunteers in 10 countries: Sweden, Denmark, the UK, Germany, France, Canada, Peru, Slovenia, Australia and the USA. There are more than 22,000 worldwide Flight Free 2020 pledges to date.

