

## Responsible Purchasing Network Helps Institutions Buy Green



The Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN) of the Center for a New American Dream celebrated its one year anniversary in early 2008. The network has grown impressively in the past year and now counts among its members prominent educational institutions such as Yale and major corporations like Office Depot, as well as two federal agencies—the USDA Forest Service and the Department of Education—11 state agencies including the California Environmental Protection Agency, and 30 municipal agencies from around the country.



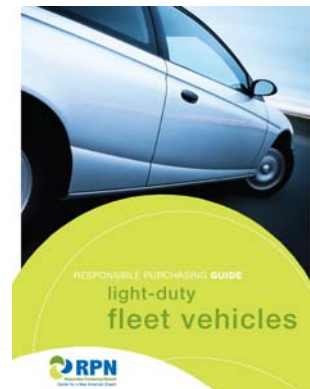
The Center for a New American Dream has been working with large institutions for several years to help them factor environmental and social attributes into purchasing decisions—from office paper to cleaners to fleet vehicles. RPN was established in early 2007 to take this work to the next level, creating a formal membership-based association of institutional purchasers that share resources and use their leverage with manufacturers to establish rigorous specifications for environmentally and socially preferable products.

The response to RPN has been overwhelmingly positive.

Today, RPN staff get daily phone calls asking for information about products, green purchasing, and the network itself. In its first full year, RPN attracted over 100 paying members with purchasing budgets totaling over 13 billion dollars—dollars that are beginning to shift toward products that are better for people and for the environment. In 2008, RPN launched a consulting business to work one-on-one with corporations to help them meet sustainability goals.

The RPN website currently features a database of well over 5,000 products, as well as Responsible Purchasing Guides for a range of products and services, including environmentally superior computers, fleet vehicles, office electronics, paint, lighting, bottled water and cleaning products. The newest guide, produced in March, 2008, helps fleet managers choose tires and lead-free wheel weights that will increase fuel efficiency and reduce negative environmental impacts.

RPN has hosted a series of national “webcasts,” each attracting between 50-100 participants representing major institutional buyers. The webcasts have produced noteworthy results. The City of San Jose, CA—tenth largest city in America—issued a new green fleet policy specifically



modeled after the recommendations provided by RPN in its webcasts and green fleet guide. According to Ken Davies of San Jose's Office of Sustainability, "RPN's green fleet guidelines and informative webcasts were invaluable resources in helping San Jose develop our new Green Fleet Policy."

Over the past year, there have been other significant victories. RPN played a key role in helping the U.S. House of Representatives, which uses approximately 70 million pieces of paper annually, to switch exclusively to 100% post-consumer waste copy paper in its office supply store. In partnership with the consulting firm Think Energy, RPN assisted the state of Wisconsin in developing a contract for the second largest state purchase of renewable energy to date, and helped the cities of Ann Arbor, MI and Cambridge, MA undertake significant renewable energy credit procurements.

# C3 Campaign Helps Conscious Consumers Cut Carbon



carbonconsciousconsumer

In late 2007, the Center for a New American Dream launched **Carbon Conscious Consumer (C3)**, a campaign encouraging individuals to take steps each month to reduce their carbon footprints. Phase I of the campaign emphasized six actions: eating locally, driving less, reducing junk mail, not buying bottled water, washing clothes in cold, and bringing their own bags when shopping. The steps were designed to be simple, achievable, and habit forming.

Participants registered their pledges on the campaign website (<http://C3.newdream.org>), which included online tools for measuring the impact of the project. Participants could track not only aggregate effects online, but also their personal impact on the campaign, as friends and friends-of-friends they induced to join took the actions.

One of the more popular and effective steps of the campaign was “**Junk Your Junk Mail.**” For this step, participants removed themselves from direct marketing lists using online tools available via the campaign website. New American Dream promoted this step online through emails and a C3 blog: <http://C3.newdream.org/blog>.

The screenshot shows the C3 website interface. At the top, the logo and tagline "BIG changes start with small steps" are visible. Below is a navigation bar with "This Month: Junk Your Junk Mail" and links for "About C3", "Past Actions", "C3 Partners", "C3 Sponsors", and "C3 Blog".

On the left, there is a pledge form titled "Take the Pledge, Spread the Word, and Win a Fabulous Prize!". The form includes fields for E-mail, First Name, Last Name, and Zip. A CAPTCHA image shows the word "chin". A "Pledge" button is at the bottom of the form. Below the form, it says "This Month's Impact" and "Pledges: 10,006".

On the right, a map of the United States is displayed with numerous green dots representing campaign spread. A legend indicates "Green dots show where the campaign has spread." Below the map, there is a "degree of separation" slider with "5th" and "6th" options, and a "play again" button.

For Junk Your Junk Mail, New American Dream formed natural partnerships with organizations such as 41 Pounds, and also found an unlikely partner in the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, which promotes getting rid of unwanted ad mail in order to protect oneself from identity theft and fraud. In September, 11,486 people took the junk mail pledge, resulting in an estimated reduction of over 1.2 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>.

In all, the C3 campaign generated over 67,000 pledges, resulting in an estimated reduction of 2.9 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> and expanding New American Dream's activist base to over 143,000 people. In an effort to reach out to a younger, more "wired" audience, New American Dream also created pages on popular social networking sites like "MySpace" and "Facebook," and publicized the campaign to bloggers. The campaign was featured in over 175 independent blogs.

**Carbon Conscious Consumer**  
BIG changes start with small steps

About C3 | Past Actions | C3 Partners | C3 Sponsors | C3 Blog

**Check out all the C3 actions**  
[Click here to check out all the past c3 actions in our archive.](#)

**Carbon Conscious Consumer Blog**

**Junk Your Junk Mail... For a Fee?**  
Posted February 28th, 2008 at 1:06 pm by michele  
According to this post on The Consumerist, Comcast has charged customers a \$2 service fee for requesting that they not receive any mailings other than their bill. Outrageous? I'd say so!  
Hidden Fees: Comcast Will Charge ...  
[Read More...](#)

Posted in [Junk Your Junk Mail](#) | [No Comments »](#)

**Workplaces Offer Incentives for Green Living**  
Posted February 26th, 2008 at 6:24 pm by michele  
We do a lot of talking about how to green our workplaces. You know the drill: energy efficient electronics, double-sided printing, hybrid fleets, the works. But what does your workplace do to green you?  
This Wall ...  
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Posted in [News](#) | [No Comments »](#)

**Greatest Greenwashers Photo Contest!**  
Posted February 25th, 2008 at 1:31 pm by michele  
Ever stumbled across an ad or billboard promoting a product as environmentally sound when it's clearly anything but? And then, after that initial "Oy, seriously?!" moment, wished you could share the humor with someone like-minded? ...  
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The C3 campaign now moves into phase II—"Carbon Conscious Community." New American Dream will work directly with five specially selected communities to help them achieve measurable carbon emission reductions. This phase will provide the opportunity to create synergies between the organization's efforts to reach individual consumers and its work with large institutional consumers through its Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN).

RPN will provide the technical assistance to enable the cities or counties to take steps to reduce carbon emissions from their operations, while New Dream Community activists will provide citizen support for these efforts and encourage citizens to make their own contributions to cutting local carbon emissions.

Building on the buzz generated by the October action on bottled water, New American Dream developed a complementary campaign focused on reducing bottled water use. For this campaign, the organization will work with at least three jurisdictions to help them stop spending public money on bottled water and to engage local activists to educate their communities, including their elected officials, about the need to reduce the demand for bottled water. New American Dream will also partner with other national organizations to educate and mobilize Americans around the country about the need to seek alternatives to bottled water. The campaign will launch in spring 2008.