

SUSTAINABILITY

protect our winters COALITION

Heat-trapping greenhouse gases are now at record-high levels

excerpted from protectourwinters.org

No doubt about it — climate change is wrecking havoc on our skiing and boarding experiences. I don't believe we can stop the trend but we can all do our part to help slow it down.

Science of Climate Change

Climate change is a term that refers to major changes in temperature, rainfall, snow, or wind patterns lasting for a decade or longer. Both human-made and natural factors contribute to climate change.

Green House Gases (GHG) are necessary for life to exist on Earth—they trap heat in the atmosphere, keeping the planet warm and in a state of equilibrium. Human activities are increasing these green house gases in the atmosphere.

The natural green house effect is being amplified as human activities (such as the combustion of fossil fuels) adding more of these gases to the atmosphere, resulting in a shift in the Earth's equilibrium in the same way that a penny will shift a scale in balance.

Although the Earth's climate has changed many times throughout its history, the rapid warming seen today cannot be explained by natural processes alone. What is clear is that the Earth's temperature and atmospheric carbon are linked— when one is high, so is the other.

Since the Industrial Revolution — the last 150 years or so — humans have impacted this natural rhythm. We've done this primarily by digging up long-buried carbon in the form of coal, oil and natural gas, and burning these fossil fuels — releasing this eons-old carbon into the atmosphere. Also, as our population has increased, methane from waste and agriculture has also increased dramatically.



photo courtesy of R. Kistner

*The 2013 POW delegation of 17 in front of the Capitol building included **Conrad Anker**, professional mountaineer and author, **Donna Carpenter**, **Burton**, **Auden Schendler**, **Aspen**, **Ryan Gellert**, **Black Diamond Equipment**, **Tyler Lamotte**, **Patagonia**, **Matt OLaughlin**, **K2 Skis**, **David Ingemie**, **SnowSports Industries America**, **Penn Newhard**, **Partner Backbone Media**, **Gretchen Bleiler**, **Olympian snowboarder**, **Chris Davenport**, **ski mountaineer**, **Callan Sifsof**, **Olympian snowboarder**, **Forrest Shearer**, **snowboarder**, **Meg Olenick**, **US Ski Team**, **Seth Wescott**, **Olympian snowboarder**, **Danny Davis**, **snowboarder**, **Angel Collinson**, **skier**, **John Jackson**, **snowboarder***

The result is that we have increased green house gases in the atmosphere to the point where we are warming the globe faster than ever before and causing our climate to change.

Protect Our Winters

Protect Our Winters (POW) was started in 2007 by pro snowboarder **Jeremy Jones** who witnessed first-hand the impact of climate change in our mountains.

After having been turned away from areas that had once been rideable and seeing resorts closed due to lack of snow, Jeremy saw a gap between the winter sports community and the action being taken by us all to address the problem.

Snow-based recreation in the United States is estimated to contribute \$67 billion annually to the US economy and supports over 900,000 jobs. So when

you look at the cost of inaction, it's serious business.

POW represents the global snow sports community — there are 23 million of us in the US alone. Clearly, it's time for us all to step up and take responsibility to save a season that fuels our passions but is also the foundation for our livelihoods, our jobs and the economic vitality of our mountain regions.

Protect Our Winters is the environmental center point of the global winter sports community, united towards a common goal of reducing climate change's effects on our sports and local economies.

POW was founded on the idea that the collective power of the winter sports community is massive, and if we can all work together, the end result can be revolutionary. Together We Can Protect Our Winters. ■