Example of carbon footprint of manufactured goods research paper

Environment, Climate Change

A carbon footprint represents the amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted to the atmosphere by both direct and indirect activities of humans. One of the major contributors to the carbon footprint is the impact of manufactured goods. Greenhouse gasses are created in the production of goods (resource extraction and manufacturing) of both the product and the packaging materials. The carbon footprint for manufactured good also includes the cost of transportation of the goods from the source to the factory to the store. In addition, the disposal of the trash generated from manufactured goods contributes to greenhouse gas emissions (US EPA, 2013).

There are many things we can do as consumers to reduce our carbon footprint from the consumption of manufactured goods. We can buy local produce and not buy produce out of season that need long distance shipping to cut back on the impact of transportation of goods. Buying products that have minimal packaging and recycling packaging materials can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing manufacturing costs (energy and water) as well as trash disposal impacts. Another positive step would be reducing the purchase of bottled water if your tap water is safe to drink. Along with this, reuse of drinking bottles and recycling them is a good compromise (Carbon Footprint Ltd., n. d.).

It should be the goal of every household, school and workplace to reduce, reuse and recycle whenever possible to reduce their carbon footprint. This not only includes the obvious recycling of plastic, glass and paper, but also recycling electronics, printer cartridges, batteries etc. Another feasible practice that can be employed in all aspects of our life is reducing the use of

paper. Not only are there the carbon emissions from the production and disposal of paper, but when trees are removed to produce paper, they are not able to absorb extra carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. We can reduce the amount of paper by printing double-sided or just printing when absolutely necessary by keeping digital copies instead of paper copies (US EPA, 2013).

There are many new technologies now being tested and employed to use trash as an energy source to reduce the carbon footprint of disposal. The United States Army is using their Tactical Garbage to Energy Refinery (TGER) to transform waste into usable energy. The TGER extracts ethanol, diesel and composite gas which powers a generator to produce electricity. The ash waste product from the TGER is benign and can be used as a soil additive. In addition, the transformation of the waste cuts down on the impact of transportation of waste to dumps as well as the outgassing of greenhouse gasses from the decomposing waste in these facilities. The TGER program boasts a 0% carbon footprint (Chavez, 2011).

Overall, there are many practices citizens in their households, schools, offices, etc. can do to reduce their overall carbon footprint with respect to the use of manufactured goods. In addition to the aforementioned practices, we can also have a positive impact by educating people in our personal and public lives about what they can do to reduce their carbon footprint.

References

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