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Personal Climate Impact Project Write Up

For my personal climate impact project, I wanted to look at how big of an effect using public transportation would have on my carbon footprint. It seemed the most feasible to say that I would only substitute public transportation for my regular driving habits just one day per week. I used the EPA’s Carbon Footprint Calculator to first calculate my current level of emissions. Before any changes, the calculator told me that I have put out 17,987 pounds of Carbon Dioxide yearly. To calculate the impact of my change, I needed to estimate how many miles I drive on a typical week. Annually I have put well over 15,000 miles on my car, so I thought it would be reasonable to estimate that I drive roughly 350 miles per week. Using this estimation, I then estimated that after implementing the change, I would drive roughly 300 miles per week. Again, using the EPA’s Carbon Footprint Calculator, I calculated my emission levels to be 16,511 pounds of Carbon Dioxide per year.

There are a few assumptions that I needed to make in order to do this project. Firstly, and possibly most significantly, I am assuming that all days of the week are equal in that I drive the same number of miles on a Tuesday that I do on a Saturday. This likely isn’t true and the true savings of emissions would vary depending on the day of the week that I used public transportation. However, for this project it seemed best that I assume that I drive roughly the same distance every day. While making the calculations, there also were a few estimations that I had to make as well. I had to estimate my utility usage since my landlord has included utilities in his rent price. Additionally, I had to estimate the gas mileage on my car since that can vary due to many factors including tire wear, air filtration, engine performance, etc. Lastly, I also had to estimate the number of miles that I drive per week since that rarely is constant from week to week.

This intervention is a very effective implementation to help reduce your carbon footprint. For example, by taking public transportation only 1 day per week, I reduced my carbon footprint by roughly 8.2%. Additionally, this change not only costs nothing to implement but it actually saves you money! The EPA Carbon Footprint Calculator estimates that I personally would save $511 per year. I don’t believe that is change is necessarily “sufficient” but I do believe that this would be a very good start in beginning to reduce our carbon footprint.

Calculations:



