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Environmental news and humor from Grist Magazine (<<http://www.gristmagazine.com>><http://www.gristmagazine.com>)

Slush Sucks

With the New Hampshire primaries looming large, local activists are in high gear trying to get environmental policy concerns a prominent spot on the presidential candidates' agendas. More than 500 such activists are operating within a group known as the [Carbon Coalition](#), which is coordinating all manner of grassroots activity — from door-to-door canvassing to direct meetings with campaign officers — to convince candidates that their commitment to curbing global warming will be a defining issue in this primary.



Looking for a warm reception in New Hampshire. Carbon Coalition volunteers Liam Grenier, 9, of Durham, and Mike Lessard, of Dover. **Photo:** Jason Pietrzak, Carbon Coalition.

The “Live Free or Die” state is an appropriate setting for this sort of climate-change rabble-rousing. In 2001, New Hampshire became the first state in the nation to implement a mandatory cap on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants with its Clean Power Act. A year earlier, it implemented the nation's first greenhouse gas registry so companies and institutions could begin tracking their CO2 emissions, laying the groundwork for a cap-and-trade system. New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine also recently coordinated on a study predicting the environmental and economic problems that global warming could cause in their states; the study concluded that disruptions to their coveted fall foliage, ski resorts, and maple-tapping season were not only bound to happen, but already in the works.

“Ten years ago, we were predicting what *might* occur [as a result of global warming], and now we're just listing off what's already begun to happen — impacts on the Northern Forest ecosystem, changes in the high alpine habitats of the White Mountains, changes in the maple-syrup industry because tapping season is happening earlier every year,” said Markham. “There are also clear changes in ice and snow conditions that are no small concern for our skiing and snowboarding industry.”

The Carbon Coalition has distributed thousands of posters around the state in preparation for the primaries, emblazoned with such slogans as “Save Our Syrup” and “Slush Sucks.” The group is also working with the National Ski Areas Association to promote “Sustainable Slopes Day” and with NRDC on the ski campaign “Keep Winter Cool,” which will be launched after the primary. Over the next week, a PBS documentary entitled “Climate Change: In Our Backyard” will air in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine, chronicling the visible and predicted impacts of global warming in New England.

So far, Markham said, the candidate who has been most enthusiastic about addressing environmental and climate change concerns is Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), victor in the Iowa caucuses. Kerry boasts a 96 percent lifetime voting record from the League of Conservation Voters, outscoring all of the other candidates. (Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman comes in second with 93 percent.) Kerry also has an aggressive energy plan, which proposes to get America's renewable-energy generation up to 20 percent of our total production portfolio by 2020. For the inside scoop on Kerry's environmental record, his plan for energy independence, and his beloved Harley Davidson Wide Glide, have a look at the [Grist interview with Kerry](#). (Also take a gander at [Grist's interviews with other Democratic candidates](#) and determine who should, in the electoral sense, live free or die.)

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