

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT OP-ED TEMPLATE

Use this template to help you write a business engagement blog post or op-ed about carbon pricing.



HOOK BUSINESSES CAN LEAD WITH THEIR VALUES

1 | Your goal here is to first hook your reader. Ask a question. State something mildly controversial or a hot topic on the news. For example, after the election of President Trump individuals and businesses are looking for opportunities to engage politically:

EXAMPLE: The Trump Administration's swift action to overhaul the political system is being met with PR statements and letters of disapproval. Companies are feeling political pressure like never before, motivated by the threat that consumers and employees will boycott their products and services.

2 | After you've reeled your reader in, comment on the relevance and importance for businesses to engage in policy:

EXAMPLE: Though the decision for companies to get political used to be taboo unless given long deliberation, it has become more dangerous to remain silent than to take a political stance. In the Trump Age, companies have no choice but to move quickly to demonstrate leadership by leading with their values.

3 | Lastly, funnel this business interest in political advocacy to your specific goal, i.e. climate change and carbon pricing.

EXAMPLE: Among the concerns of human rights and security, President Trump and his Cabinet picks are doing little to continue the progress we've made for low-cost efficiency and local clean energy.

SECOND PARAGRAPH WHAT IS CARBON PRICING?

How would you explain carbon pricing to someone who has never heard of it before? While many run straight to the economic approach, by explaining

externalities and market failures, this can be a sure fire way turn your reader away (or to sleep). By brainstorming some **POSITIVE, SIMPLE,** and **ENGAGING** talking points, your reader will understand the policy and its benefits in one fell swoop. Here are some key talking points to use:

Putting a price on carbon would encourage accountability on heavy polluters to reduce emissions and make the choice to invest in clean energy and low-carbon growth.

Carbon pricing shifts the social costs of climate change onto polluters, leveling the playing field and changing the incentive structure underpinning our over-reliance on dirty, less efficient fuel sources.

After you've explained the general policy, bring it back to your key engagement goal: businesses. Why should a business care about this over some other political advocacy effort?

With more companies looking to show political leadership, carbon pricing offers the opportunity for business to differentiate themselves from the mainstream marketplace.

With a growing values-driven millennial workforce and customer base, the demand for innovative, smart solutions is only becoming more appealing.

THIRD PARAGRAPH STATE POLICY

After explaining how carbon pricing works in general, it's time to narrow your focus and explain what state legislation or efforts are underway. Be sure to avoid legal or economic jargon in your explanation. Play it up to make it seem interesting and valuable to the public. Also, be sure to link more information/resources, especially if you have a coalition or advocacy group website.

MA EXAMPLE: On the more local level, there are two bills in the Massachusetts legislature

that propose a statewide carbon pollution fee. HD 2370, sponsored by Representative Jennifer Benson and SD 1817, sponsored by Senator Michael Barrett.

Get more information on these bills in Massachusetts at: <https://climate-xchange.org/state/massachusetts/> or refer to our State Carbon Pricing page for the most updated state by state information at: <https://climate-xchange.org/network/>

FOURTH PARAGRAPH LOCAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS

You've explained the context, what it is, and what's happening in the state. While it's still fresh in their minds, it's time to bring it back to what is most important: carbon pricing benefits business and the local economy.

If your state is a fossil fuel importer, a carbon price would keep more money in the state.

EXAMPLE: Because Massachusetts imports all of our natural gas, money spent on natural gas is money sent out of state. Pricing carbon would reduce the amount of money sent out of state, recycling it within the local economy, bringing jobs, investment, and innovation.

If your state has a large fossil fuel production market, try to focus on the benefits of diversifying your energy portfolio and transitioning your economy and workforce with a smart and thoughtful mechanism.

TIP: This paragraph is the perfect place to include any facts, statistics, predictions, estimations you may have about the policy or policy mechanism.

FIFTH PARAGRAPH: BUSINESSES ARE ALREADY DOING THIS

Regardless of the talking points, facts, or figures you present, some members of your audience won't be convinced that this benefits the business community. What that person probably doesn't know is that most businesses either already do this, no how to do this, or are already considering doing it!

Carbon pricing is already becoming deeply embedded into business strategy and a growing number of companies are setting internal carbon prices. Why would a business set an internal carbon price?

Better inform the financial benefits and risks of investing in new projects

Wide belief among business leaders that carbon will be priced.

Growing investor sentiment that carbon pollution poses significant financial risk to companies' bottom line.

CONCLUSION

To conclude your business engagement piece, bring it full circle. Don't let your reader forget that carbon pricing is a practical, effective solution that spurs the transition to a low-carbon, innovation economy. Restate this as a method for businesses to lead with their values and differentiate themselves from the market.

If you have a "call-to-action" you want to make sure you close with it. Do you want businesses to simply show their support? Is there an upcoming deadline in the legislature that needs to be addressed? Keeping your goal in mind, write an effective "call-to-action" sentence.

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