

# Ask EcoGirl

By Patricia Dines

EcoGirl@AskEcoGirl.info



## Supporting Effective Eco-Action

To protect the health and well-being of ourselves and our families, it's vital that we integrate smart eco-behaviors into our everyday lives.

However, not every problem can be addressed at an individual level. Thus we also need to regularly join with others in community-level actions. By doing this, we'll be more successful at standing up to harmful behaviors, making our systems more fair, and exercising our fundamental right to create our lives.

It's vital that these action campaigns also be intelligently designed, so they create real results *and* best use everyone's time, money, and energy. We're often dealing with well-funded and powerful status quo interests, so we need to use our people power effectively!

### So, what can you do?

**1) Look for opportunities to support community-level actions.** You'll often see easy options in articles, emails, and Facebook posts. For instance, folks might invite you to sign a petition, call an elected official, donate to a nonprofit, or give some time to a project.

**2) Evaluate the quality of proposed community actions.** It can be tempting to just do or forward any action, thinking, "Well, at least I'm doing something." But campaign quality does vary, and ill-considered actions can multiply out, causing real harm to our shared goals. By being discerning and responsible in what we support, we'll improve the results for everyone!

**3) Assess proposed actions by asking yourself these four key questions:**

- **Is the requested action CLEAR and sensible?** Often I see folks get fired up by passionate but unclear calls with contradictory arguments. These are unlikely to produce positive results.

- **Is the action based on actual and relevant FACTS?** In an era when we

often see made-up Einstein quotes and manipulative sound bites, a key way for us to reclaim our power is by bringing forward essential facts. But when we believe and act from untruths, we undermine our own power, block our desired results, turn off potential supporters, and look like unfair buffoons.

- **Does the action have a solid underlying LOGIC and STRATEGY?** Watch out for calls that don't reflect a basic understanding of the relevant laws, stakeholders, or target audience.

- **WHO is calling for the action, and are they credible?** It's important that we note (and support) those people and organizations that offer accurate facts, quality logic, and useful actions.

**4) If you're unsure of the quality of an action, look online for the advice of people or groups skilled in that domain. Or just skip it.** If the issue is important to you, look online for a smarter campaign to support and forward.

**5) Nurture larger-scale results by regularly bringing quality knowledge and action options into your everyday life and information stream.** To do this, identify competent people and groups, especially on the topics most important to you. Then get on their email lists, "like" their Facebook pages, go to their websites, learn about the issues, and look for ways to participate in their work. Allot time for this in your schedule!

As each of us do this consistently, we cumulatively create a significant impact. Plus it's often fun and rewarding, as we get to give our gifts, learn and grow, connect with others who care, and shift from feeling powerless to productive.

We benefit every day because of the people who acted at the community level to stop harm and improve our shared well-being. Let's honor their

contributions by carrying on that tradition.

### Some of my useful resources

I have lots of information online to support you in taking smart eco-action, at both the personal and community levels. These include:

**1) Email list.** Get an email when each of my print articles goes online. [www.patriciadines.info/EList.html](http://www.patriciadines.info/EList.html)

**2) Facebook page.** Receive ongoing and timely information, inspiration, and actions. [www.facebook.com/AskEcoGirl](http://www.facebook.com/AskEcoGirl)

**3) Theme pages.** Peruse my Ask EcoGirl columns by topic area, including: Creating a Healthy Home, Food & Agriculture, Jobs & Economy, Energy & Transportation, Toxics & Health, Being an Eco-Smart Consumer, Effective Activism, and Shifting Our Thinking. [www.askecogirl.info/AEColumnsThemes.html](http://www.askecogirl.info/AEColumnsThemes.html)

**4) "The Life & Times of EcoGirl" blog.** Read my more-personal writing on a wider range of topics. [www.patriciadines.info/LTEblog.html](http://www.patriciadines.info/LTEblog.html)

I hope you find this information helpful. I invite you to share it with others!

---

*Ask EcoGirl is written by Patricia Dines, Author of [The Organic Guides](#), and Editor and Lead Writer for [The Next STEP](#) newsletter. Email your questions about going green to [EcoGirl@AskEcoGirl.info](mailto:EcoGirl@AskEcoGirl.info) for possible inclusion in future columns. Also see "Ask EcoGirl" on Facebook! And contact EcoGirl for information about carrying this syndicated column in your periodical.*

*"EcoGirl: Encouraging the eco-hero in everyone. Making it easy to be green!"*

© Copyright Patricia Dines, 2013. All rights reserved.

Published in the *Sonoma County Gazette*, January 2013.

**For more Ask EcoGirl columns, see [www.askecogirl.info](http://www.askecogirl.info)**