



# TERA

Targeted Emissions Reduction Agreement

**Colin Baylen MS2**

colin.baylen@ucsf.edu

**Stephen Ettinger MS2**

stephen.ettinger@ucsf.edu

UCSF School of Medicine

UCOP Carbon Neutrality Initiative Fellows

## BACKGROUND

Climate change poses substantial threats to earth's biological systems and will impact human health through increased morbidity and mortality from infectious disease, increased heat-related illness, compromised food security and water supplies, resource conflicts, climate-induced migration, and many other pathways. Vulnerable populations in the U.S. and people living in low-resource countries will be affected earliest and greatest. Global emissions continue to rise annually, and the United States is the second greatest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> worldwide – the U.S. healthcare sector alone accounts for approximately 10% of these emissions. One of the greatest sources of this release is air travel. As a global leader in healthcare with the stated mission of 'advancing health worldwide', we believe UCSF has a responsibility to actively mitigate its carbon footprint and the impacts of climate change on human health.

## UCSF EMISSIONS DATA / AIR TRAVEL

Airline travel by faculty and employees at UCSF is understood to be a major source of carbon emissions for the university. According to UCSF's annual sustainability reports, airline travel represented approximately 8% of the university's carbon footprint in 2009; in 2017 this figure was 12%. This number has steadily increased every year since UCSF started tracking its emissions and doubled between 2017 and 2018.

## OUR PROPOSAL

TERA is a UCSF student-led initiative aimed at reducing UCSF's air travel related emissions to 0% through a university-wide travel carbon offset program. The Targeted Emissions Reduction Agreement (TERA) asks medical departments at UCSF to commit to purchasing a carbon offset for each episode of travel by a member of that department.

## CARBON OFFSET PARTNER

Many business and academic trips are necessary and unavoidable. Carbon offsets are a way to compensate for the associated emissions with this travel by reducing emissions in other ways. We have partnered with a local, non-profit carbon offset vendor called Cool Effect that works on rigorously vetted carbon offset projects around the world. They are a transparent organization with a track record of collaboration with the University of California, Yale, MIT, and Salesforce.

## CARBON OFFSET PROJECT

Carbon offsets purchased through TERA will fund a project that works alongside local families across rural Honduras to build efficient cookstoves that use just half the amount of wood of a traditional one. When wood use is cut by half, so is household air pollution and carbon emissions. We have estimated that a medium-sized department at UCSF generates approximately 1225 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> (MtCO<sub>2</sub>) per year from air travel. Offsetting department air travel at the amount of \$8.50 per domestic flight (apx. 1 MtCO<sub>2</sub>) and \$17 per international flight (apx. 2 MtCO<sub>2</sub>) would build 150 new cookstoves. Each would offset 15 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over their 6 year lifespan,

reducing household air pollution for hundreds, significantly decreasing the amount of firewood each family purchases, and freeing local women of hours each day that would otherwise be spent gathering fuel.

#### **OUR ASK**

- Two quarter commitment to TERA pilot project—extension TBD after second quarter
- Permit sharing of quarterly travel expense reporting with CNI Fellows and Cool Effect
- Approve discretionary departmental funds for quarterly offset purchasing
- Designate an administrative contact to help facilitate tracking/purchasing with UCSF project coordinator at Cool Effect

We are grateful for your consideration of our proposal and welcome any questions.

Sincerely,  
Stephen Ettinger, M.D. candidate 2022  
Colin Baylen, M.D. candidate 2022