

The State of Our Land

The Jewish people have a special responsibility to preserve and protect the Land of Israel. With a growing population of 6.5 million and a land mass the size of New Jersey, it is of critical importance to protect Israel's natural resources and preserve its remaining open space. Israel has led the search for environmentally sustainable and economically sound ways to promote growth while protecting Israel's unique environment. Yet Israel also faces significant environmental challenges which need to be addressed.



Clean Air

- **Air pollution is a major and increasing problem in Israel.**
- The Tel Aviv-Jaffa region has the worst air pollution among European cities, causing over 1,500 deaths each year.⁷
- One child in five in Israel suffers from breathing difficulties as a result of serious air pollution. Air-related health costs are estimated at over \$77.4 million a year.⁷
- Primary cause: vehicles on the road. In the last five years, \$220 million has been spent on expansion of roads, while public transportation has not been improved.⁷

Solutions:

- **Clean Air Law** enacted in Israel in 2008.
- **Mass transit** needed, along with new hybrid cars/buses.⁸

Try this at home: Don't idle your car. Use public transportation! Bike or walk when you can.

Waste and Recycling

- **Israel produces 5.8 million tons of garbage each year — nearly 5 pounds/person/day.** Over 80% of this waste is still buried in landfills.³
- Israelis use over 14 million plastic bags every day. Plastic bags constitute 28% of discarded garbage by volume.²
- The present rate of recycling in Israel ranges from 10 to 25%. Jerusalem only recycles 3% of its annual waste.³
- Waste quantities in Eilat are higher than average (3.02 kg), due to the waste generated by hotels and tourists.³

Solutions:

- **Paying for the true cost of landfills** will discourage waste and encourage recycling. Levies now imposed on trash dumped in landfills; for households, it will rise to NIS 50 by 2011. Funds will be invested to reach goal of 50% recycling within 10 years.³
- **New industries** will support new green markets, for example using 2 million tires discarded each year to support Israel's growing rubber market.^{2,3}

Try this at home: Recycle, purchase products from recycled content, and reduce your own waste.

Precious Water

- **Israel is confronting a serious water crisis.**
- Lake Kinneret is Israel's only surface fresh water source. Drinking water also comes from springs & underground water tables.¹
- Israel's total annual renewable water resources amount to some 60 billion ft³, 65% used for irrigation.¹
- Water consumption grew from 106 to 108 m³/person in 2007.²
- In Summer 2008, Israel's main aquifers and Lake Kinneret dipped below their red lines, to 213 m below sea level, endangering water quality.^{3,4}

Solutions:

- **Conservation** can save up to 500 million m³ a year.⁵
- **Water-saving devices** on faucets, toilets, etc. can bring savings up to 15% of all water usage.⁵
- **Desalination** plants supply 138 million m³/y of water; completion of Hadera plant will yield 100 million m³ more. Goal: increase desalinated water to 750 million m³/y by 2020.⁶

Try this at home: Turn off the faucet! Fix leaks and install water-saving devices. Switch from bottled water to filtered.

Energy and Climate

- **Israel's climate has experienced a warming trend since the 1970s.**
- Experts predict average temperatures to increase 1.5 °C by 2020, and 5 °C by 2100.
- Precipitation is expected to decrease 10% by 2020 and 20% by 2050, with a 25% reduction of water availability by 2100.³

Solutions:

- Approximately 60% of Israel is desert. Extensive R&D underway to enable the Negev desert to provide **solar power** in the future.
- **Solar water heaters** cover roof-tops all over the country. These systems save their owners some 2,000 kWh per year in electricity costs.¹

Try this at home: Save energy! Turn off the lights and other appliances. Insulate your home. Wash dishes and clothes with a full load.

For more facts and Jewish teachings, visit:
www.CanfeiNesharim.org

FOOTNOTES: *m³ = million cubic meters
1. www.mfa.gov.il 2. IUED 3. Ministry of the Environment, www.environment.gov.il
4. www.adamteva.org.il 5. www.haaretz.com 6. heschel.org.il
7. www.aspni.org 8. www.mixedpower.com/industry-news/israel