

GREEN HONGWANJI INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the teachings of the Buddha guides us to act in compassion and wisdom;

WHEREAS, humanity has abused the environment in which we live today;

WHEREAS, our Sangha needs leadership and education on how to live in harmony and sustainability with our precious planet;

WHEREAS, other churches and organizations have already developed programs to embrace environmental awareness and sustainability;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2015 Hawaii Kyodan Lay Convention approve a program, the 'Green Hongwanji Initiative", to educate, set goals and develop an action plan to help temples and members live in ecological harmony within our communities, State and planet. This program would be led by a Kyodan committee charged with initial implementation by the 2016 Legislative Assembly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution, upon its approval, be directed by said Legislative Assembly.

JUSTIFICATION DOCUMENT

Our environment is under unprecedented threat of climate change, pollution and resource sustainability. Many organizations are working to address these challenges. The “Green Schools Initiative (<http://www.greenschools.net>) provides a model of how to get an organization to make positive changes to protect our community in a collaborative, educational way. Here’s an excerpt from their website:

The Green Schools Initiative was founded in 2004 by parent-environmentalists who were shocked by how unenvironmental their kids' schools were and mobilized to improve the environmental health and ecological sustainability of schools in the U.S. We believe it is essential to protect children's health - at school and in the world beyond school - and we work to catalyze and support "green" actions by kids, teachers, parents, and policymakers to reduce the environmental footprint of schools by:

- Eliminating toxics
- Using resources sustainably
- Creating green schoolyards and buildings
- Serving healthy food and
- Teaching environmental literacy and stewardship.

The environmental impact of the 130,000 public, private and charter K-12 schools, which educate or employ 1 in 5 Americans, is enormous, in financial, ecological and health terms. The impact includes millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions, thousands of tons of garbage and toxic waste, and exposure to unhealthy conditions that affect students' ability to learn. A growing body of evidence shows that "green" schools that integrate sustainable facilities, healthy operations, and environmental curricula result in environmental and financial savings, improved health for students and staff, and better academic achievement.

We work to transform schools into models of sustainability for communities, engaging youth in hands-on, inquiry-based learning and action to improve the health and sustainability of facilities and operations. We advocate for policies, action plans, and professional development that foster high performance, cost-efficient, and academically excellent schools. Our work focuses on training teachers, parents, facility directors, school board members and others in our "7 Steps to a Green School" approach; providing the tools and resources to support schools in reducing their environmental footprint; and advocating for state policies that support healthy and sustainable schools and environmental literacy. We have trained about 2,000 educators from 350 schools and districts. We focus our efforts on K-12 schools and districts throughout California; and we collaborate with and support organizations and individuals in other states and nationally.

The Green Schools Initiative is a mostly volunteer effort, relying on dedicated parents, teachers, staff, and School Board members to start Green Teams and implement green school programs in their own communities. We provide training, support, and advocacy to leverage their efforts. We also establish strategic partnerships with other education, environment, and health organizations, and eco-friendly businesses.

This model can be adapted for our temples through a Statewide Green Team to educate and support Temple Green Teams identify and initiate green projects.

With the leadership of a Kyodan Green Team Committee to develop and guide all the temples, Hongwanji can help its members and temples lead more sustainable lives.