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Climate Counting More with Consumer Companies

84% of Companies Show Improvement in 2nd Climate Counts Company Scorecard Transparency Is Critical to Consumers

(May 7th, 2008) Climate Counts' (www.climatecounts.org) second annual Company Scorecard shows scored companies making climate improvements across most industry sectors. Eighty-four percent of the scored companies —among them some of the world's largest—made improvements in their efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and to make information about those actions easily accessible to consumers. The Scorecard, first released in June 2007, scores 56 major corporations in well-known consumer sectors – from apparel to electronics to fast food – on their commitment to reversing climate change.

"Business is being pushed by consumers to do its part to solve the climate crisis," said Gary Hirshberg, chair of Climate Counts and CEO of organic yogurt maker Stonyfield Farm. "The Scorecard allows consumers to make good climate decisions in their everyday purchases, and it's having an impact."

Google, Anheuser-Busch and Levi Strauss had the largest score improvement, each jumping over 20 points. Improvement was broad, however with the average company score improving 22 percent over the past year. Nike passed last year's high scorer, Canon, to become the top scored company.

"Company transparency is critical to allowing consumers to make good decisions," said Wood Turner, Climate Counts project director. "The time for companies to just say 'trust us, we're good on climate' has passed. Consumers want to see the proof behind the green claims. They want to know it's not just marketing talk, but real substantive action."

It wasn't all good climate news. Five companies scored one or zero points: Jones Apparel Group, Burger King, Darden Restaurants (which owns the popular chains Red Lobster and Olive Garden), Yum! Brands (parent to Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and KFC) and Wendy's. The Food Services sector had the lowest average (11.5 out of 100) of any of the eight sectors measured with smallest overall improvement. There were a total of 10 companies – down from 18 last year – scoring in the lowest tier of companies, or under 12 points overall.

"We're excited about the level of interest in the Scorecard from both consumers and business," said Turner. "In order to broaden our reach and applicability, we'll be expanding the number of companies we monitor later this year."

The companies were scored on a scale from zero to 100, based on 22 criteria that fall within four benchmarks: whether they measure their carbon footprint; what efforts they have made to reduce their own climate impact; whether they support or oppose global warming legislation; and what they disclose to the public about their work to address climate change.

Consumers can review all the company scores and download a pocket-sized shopping guide at www.climatecounts.org. Consumers will also be able to look up companies' rankings by texting "cc company name" (for example, "cc Nike") to 30644 from their cell phones so they can make climate-friendly consumer decisions while they shop. An expansion of Climate Counts' mobile phone activism program is planned for later this summer.