

Dear Ciara,

My manifesto is very simple. If Californians are concerned about climate change (and they should be terrified. I would have thought they would be thinking of little else) then the first, simplest, most direct and painless step each and every one of them could take personally would be to string up a clothes line and use it every day for all their laundry. Most of the rest of the world does this, generally under vastly less appropriate climactic conditions. For example, it rains, on average every second day where I live in Auckland, New Zealand. Huge amounts of fossil-fuel-derived energy are expended on drying clothes in California, where it barely rains at all. Crazy. When I used to hang out my washing in LA, I frequently had people try to convince me not to – as if I was self-flagellating in some way, even though I really enjoy hanging out (and even better, bringing in, when it is all stiff and smells good) line hung laundry.

Some context: Americans spend nine billion dollars on energy to dry clothes per year. That's the same amount of energy as refrigerators, clothes washers and dishwashers combined.

The link below suggests that four billion dollars could be saved annually by Americans switching to heat pump style clothes dryers, and that this would prevent roughly 16 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually. Extrapolating those figures suggests that around nine billion dollars could be saved and thirty-six million tons of carbon could be prevented from entering the atmosphere by just ditching the dryers altogether. This is cheap, easy and satisfying!

<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/efficient-clothes-dryers-IB.pdf>