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Good Energies
POWER FOR A BETTER WORLD

We are losing the race to prevent the most catastrophic impacts of global warming. To limit global warming to less than 2-degrees Celsius, annual global emissions need to be reduced to about 35 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per year by 2030, down from a projected “business as usual” 65 gigatons CO₂e per year. The national commitments made under the Paris Agreement are projected to result in only one-third of the necessary reductions—if they are all fully implemented. The planet now faces an unacceptable future trajectory of 3-degrees Celsius or more in warming. We must pursue new and transformative strategies to achieve deep decarbonization.

The Climate Breakthrough Project—an initiative of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation in partnership with the Oak Foundation and Good Energies Foundation—seeks to launch breakthrough climate mitigation efforts by identifying, supporting, and unleashing innovative leaders with transformative strategies.

Philanthropic donors and NGOs often coalesce around what they perceive to be established successful strategies, usually tied to existing concepts and institutions. But this usually leads to incremental change—and we need a paradigm shift to arrest climate change. Concentrating resources on a limited set of approaches also leaves enormous opportunity on the table: for exploration of novel and potentially game-changing strategies, and for the empowerment of promising leaders who offer powerful, high-risk, high-reward innovations in the climate space.

Climate Breakthrough aims to provide resources and support for innovation in social, behavior, economic, and policy change in support of arresting global warming, and will support leaders and projects with the potential to result in climate change mitigation at significant pace and scale.

Launched in 2016, Climate Breakthrough selects one to three individuals or teams each year for funding. We are seeking driven, innovative, highly strategic, tenacious people who can inspire and lead others, and who have, above all else, already demonstrated their capacity to turn new ideas into reality. We are looking to support outstanding people, not specific institutions or organizations. Award recipients will receive \$2 million (USD) over three years to develop and pursue scalable strategies of their own design. Beyond funding, award recipients receive tailored resources and assistance to bolster the creation, launch, and scaling of their strategies. Climate Breakthrough is a global initiative: candidates for the award may be based anywhere in the world and they need not speak English.

Our focus is on finding exceptional strategists and giving them the time, space, and resources to create and implement the boldest strategies they can conceive to mitigate climate change. At the time of selection, some awardees have a clear idea of the strategy they will pursue, while others take time to explore and select among several ideas. When considering proposed climate mitigation ideas, Climate Breakthrough cares most about the potential scale of the idea and the pace at which it might achieve mitigation. The strategies our awardees pursue will, if successful, lead to tangible changes that reduce (or capture) greenhouse gas emissions on a globally meaningful scale—changes that could reduce global annual emissions by hundreds of megatons

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of CO₂e within ten years. For most awardees, this will mean pursuing strategies that affect entire industries or countries and materially change the lives of millions of people.

We do not expect that all of our awardees' strategies will reduce annual emissions during the three-year period of funding provided by Climate Breakthrough. But we do expect that within that time their strategies will either demonstrate they are on a trajectory to success, or they will be shown to be ineffectual. Not every strategy Climate Breakthrough funds will achieve success. We expect strategies will change and we expect strategies will fail. We are looking for those who are willing to think big and take risks to address the defining problem of our age.

Award Recipient Profiles

2016

John Hepburn (Australia)

John is the founder and executive director of the Australian-based Sunrise Project, which was created in 2012. Previous to his work with Sunrise, John worked for a decade as a campaigner for Greenpeace and with Friends of the Earth before that. John is a serial entrepreneur and has founded numerous environmentally focused small businesses and side projects. John is largely credited with developing and implementing a strategy to stop the expansion of the coal export industry in Australia. John's breakthrough work is focused on harnessing the power of social movements to shift finance out of fossil fuels, with an initial focus on making coal uninsurable.

May Mei (China)

May Mei is the founder of GoalBlue, a startup NGO that aims to spark lifestyle changes with big climate impacts among China's rapidly growing middle class. When Climate Breakthrough first met May Mei she had been at WildAid China for 12 years and was the chief representative for the organization, running an office of 15 staff. Before her career with WildAid, she was a director and producer for mainstream Chinese television, including CCTV and Hunan Satellite TV. May was a key member of the very successful team at WildAid that became known for its game changing campaign in China on shark fin soup, and now, with GoalBlue, she's taking on two of the fastest-growing sources of emissions in China: meat consumption and private car ownership. Her work engages young people via reality TV, social media, and partnerships with consumer brands and celebrities. She's looking to help make bicycle use in major cities the most alluring and common form of personal transportation and to slow the project growth in China's red meat consumption by 40 percent.

2017

Fuqiang Yang (China)

Dr. Fuqiang Yang is a senior adviser on climate change, energy, and environment at NRDC China. He has been involved in energy and environmental issues for more than four decades. Fuqiang is an established leader with a proven track record of effecting large-scale change. He is generally credited for successfully implementing a cap on coal consumption in China, which has been integrated into China's national 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development. He has a sophisticated understanding of how to move policy in China and a strong network of political and corporate stakeholders in the energy sector. Fuqiang's breakthrough idea is to push for an oil consumption cap in China, building on the model used to secure the coal cap.

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