



# Bowie Earth Year 2020

## 100 Acts of Green



1. **Calculate your carbon footprint.** Many of our daily activities - such as using electricity, driving a car, or disposing of waste - cause greenhouse gas emissions. Together these emissions make up a household's carbon footprint. (<https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/>)

2. **Do a household energy audit.** A whole-house approach for identifying not only factors that can make a home inefficient in energy usage, but also uncomfortable and potentially unsafe. An energy audit typically lasts 3 to 4 hours and consists of a home inspection, a blower door test, a safety test for your water heater and heating equipment, and a detailed report that contains prioritized recommendations. For more information, see Bowie's program here. (<https://www.cityofbowie.org/1003/Energy-Audit-Program>)

3. **Check seals on windows and doors.** Stop losing money. Seal up cracks between your toasty interior and windy exterior. This can greatly reduce your homes energy usage through more efficient heating and cooling. Of course, lowering energy usage saves you money and lowers your carbon footprint.

4. **Make sure your refrigerator and freezer are well sealed.** It's easy to replace the gaskets and keep the cold air where it belongs. Leaking seals cause your unit to work harder, using more energy than necessary.

5. **Check heating and air conditioning ducts.** Improve the efficiency of your heating and cooling systems by repairing, replacing, or

insulating leaky heating, ventilation and air conditioning ducts.

6. **Properly dispose of your appliances.** We know this seems random, but it's one of the most impactful things you can do for the environment. Air conditioners and refrigerators run on hydro fluorocarbons, a refrigerant that releases tons of carbon dioxide when not properly removed. So don't leave your old mini fridge on the side of the road... like we did that one time in college when we didn't know better.

7. **Reuse whenever you can.** Yes, recycling is great. Still, it can be easy to forget that recycling consumes a lot of energy too. You know what takes less energy? Reusing items!



8. **Support forest protection organizations.** Planting trees is awesome, but it takes decades to foster the biodiversity and complexity that preexisting forests have. The older the forest, the more it's able to trap and synthesize carbon dioxide. That's why it's so important to invest in protecting the forested lands that are currently in danger. Check out this list of conservation and forestry organizations that need your help.

9. **Start a compost pile/bin.** All you need to get started is a bin (or bag) to collect your food scraps. Some bins are so good looking, they could double as counter-top decor. Nothing says eco-fabulous quite like a mid-century modern compost bin, right?

10. **Turn off the lights.** On average, we consume 12,000 watts of energy per year - that's six times more than what environmental scientists recommend. Just being intentional about your





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energy usage can go a long way to living more efficiently.

11. **Do a plastic “stock-take.”** We all know that plastic free and reusable items are better for the environment. Still, we challenge you to look around your house and see how many you are actually using and make changes where possible.

12. **Shop bamboo.** You may already know about 100% bamboo toilet paper rolls, but bamboo can do a lot more than just make a softer experience! It can make furniture, bicycles, boats, baskets, fabric and almost every part of your house. Bamboo is technically grass, so it repopulates quickly, and it is a super sustainably harvested material. In fact, bamboo takes carbon out of the air faster than nearly any other plant.

13. **Go for a walk.** If we all traveled by foot instead of by car for just 5% of our outings, we’d save 2.6 gigatons of carbon dioxide by 2050. That’s over 2 billion metric tons, or the mass of 14 billion elephants! Walk whenever possible, for your overall wellness and to reduce single occupant trips.

14. **Try solar power.** Rooftop solar panels are an incredible way to generate electricity without releasing any greenhouse gasses. If you’re not ready for all of that, solar-powered appliances are a great way to test the waters. Start with a small (2’ by 2’ square) panel on your South facing roof, and use it to recharge small electronics and rechargeable batteries.



15. **Be water conscious.** An average 10-minute shower wastes around 20-25 gallons of water, so try to keep your lather time to 4 minutes. Unless you spend your days rolling in mud (which actually sounds very fun), you shouldn’t need longer.

16. **Take mass transit.** Too far to walk? Too rusty on a bike? Take advantage of your city’s public transportation! If mass transit accounted for 40% of urban travel, we’d save 6.6 gigatons of carbon dioxide by 2050. If a car is truly your only option, try carpooling or using ridesharing apps.

17. **Vote.** Climate change can seem like a problem of personal consumption, but it is important to recognize the structural changes that we need for a healthier planet. Put your money where your recycling bin is and support candidates that share your passion for environmental justice.



18. **Only purchase the groceries you need.** Big-box and bulk purchase stores offer great deals, but if you are not actually eating everything you buy, it’s a terrible deal for the planet. When you throw away uneaten food, you’re also tossing the energy, seeds and water it took to grow and transport it.

19. **Eat a plant-rich diet.** A study from the Environmental Working Group, shows that red meat is responsible for 10 to 40 times as many greenhouse gas emissions as vegetables and grains. And it’s not just cheeseburgers that are the problem. Just the act of growing the feed for livestock emits a shocking amount of nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

20. **Have a conversation.** Too many people think that climate change is too big, too far away or too science-y to understand. Check out Katherine Hayhoe’s [TED Talk](#) to learn more about the importance of chatting about the earth.

21. **Support with your dollar.** Your money is a powerful tool for change. Support businesses that are kind to the environment, consider where your savings, investment, banking, and energy dollars are going, and demand investments into clean energy and away from fossil fuels.



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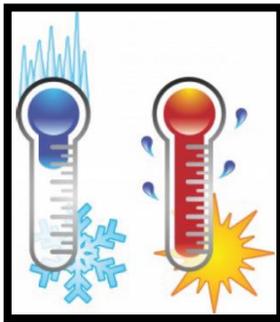


22. **Buy less clothing.** Worldwide, 80% of used textiles end up in a landfill. Fast fashion is a very real threat to the environment, so try to only buy the things that you truly need and love. Even better, buy second-hand to break the cycle of over-consumption. After all, a healthy planet never goes out of style.

23. **Cook with in-season veggies.** Skip the produce that's had to be flown halfway across the world. In-season produce tastes so much more delicious anyway. Check out seasonal shopping guides for summer or winter, and think of all of the wonderful fruit pies you could make.

24. **Buy eco-friendly paper products.** Each day, 27,000 trees are cut down just to make toilet paper. By making the switch to recycled paper products, certified for environmental impact, you are helping fight deforestation and reducing CO2 emissions.

25. **Give your thermostat a nudge.** In winter, set your thermostat back when you're asleep, even more when away from home, and even more when on vacation. Do the opposite in the summertime.



but your energy bill will.

A programmable thermostat can do the work for you. As a general rule, move your heater thermostat down two degrees in winter and up two degrees in the summer. You probably won't even notice two degrees,

26. **Adjust your fridge and freezer temperature.** Set your fridge to 38 degrees F and your freezer to 5 degrees F. And buy an inexpensive "high-low thermometer." It will keep track of how cold and warm it gets. If there's a power failure while you aren't home, the thermometer can tell you how warm that food got!

27. **Take shorter showers.** Trimming two minutes off your shower time can cut your water usage by 10 gallons. Try getting wet, turning off the water to soap up, and back on again to rinse.

28. **Install a low-flow shower head.** You probably won't notice the difference, but installing an efficient shower head can reduce your water usage by 2,700 gallons per year.

29. **Wash your clothes only when necessary.** You might get two days out of that sweatshirt if you are just knocking around the house. Wash full loads, and use cold, warm, or eco-warm if your machine has it. .

30. **Fix leaky faucets and shower heads.** A faucet or shower head that drips 60 drips per minute wastes 5 gallons of water a day. That's 2,082 gallons per year. And if it's hot water, it wastes energy as well. At a couple of cents to heat a gallon -- sure that's not quite \$42, but it's \$42 less than you would have without the leak.



31. **Set the temperature on your water heater to 120 degrees.** It's safer, reducing the risk of scalding, and saves energy. When you go on vacation turn it down even further.

32. **Invest in reusable products.** Things like grocery bags and reusable water bottles. Then use them! We often forget to take bags into the grocery store, so put them where you can see them, not in the trunk.

33. **Install a rain barrel.** It can store water that would normally head for the storm drains, use it to water outdoor plants. Take a jug out to fill it to water indoor plants, too. The City has advice at



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([https://www.cityofbowie.org/DocumentCenter/View/36/rain\\_barrel\\_brochure](https://www.cityofbowie.org/DocumentCenter/View/36/rain_barrel_brochure)).

times, they are made without animal testing as well. (<https://nymag.com/strategist/article/best-natural-organic-cleaning-products.html>).

34. **Plant native trees and plants on your property.** For carbon sequestration, storm water retention, and to aid pollinators. Plant or donate a tree through our Canopy Project. Bowie offers rebates for planting native trees on your property (<https://www.cityofbowie.org/942/Tree-Canopy>). Plant trees and shrubs to shade your house in the Summer. Deciduous trees will shade your house during the Summer and allow the sun to warm it in winter.
35. **Get involved.** Join Earth Day Network's campaign to Protect Our Species (<https://www.earthday.org/campaigns/endangered-species/earthday2019/>).
36. **Get more involved.** Join Earth Day Network's campaign to End Plastic Pollution (<https://www.earthday.org/yourjourney2018/>).
37. **And then double down on involvement.** Join Earth Day Network's campaign to create Foodprints for the Future (<http://foodprints.earthday.org>).
38. **Help keep our green spaces clean.** Join a local park, river or beach clean-up program. Bowie's Weed Warriors would be a good place to start. (<https://www.cityofbowie.org/881/Weed-Warriors>).
39. **Recycle paper, metal cans, and glass bottles.** Also recycle plastic, but not all plastic. Be sure to check the City's web site to see what plastic can, and cannot, be recycled. Anything you throw in that blue bin that can't be profitably processed for recycling just ends up going from the recycling facility to the landfill.
40. **Use environmentally friendly, non-toxic cleaning products.** They clean just as well, and cut back on toxins in the environment. Many
41. **Replace inefficient incandescent light bulbs.** LEDs are about 80 percent more efficient than incandescent bulbs. To see how much money you might save, check out this energy saving calculator (<https://www.bulbs.com/learning/energycalc.aspx>). Bowie frequently offers light bulb exchanges so you can replace some for free! (<https://www.cityofbowie.org/2482/Lightbulbs>).
42. **Carpool, ride your bike, use public transportation.** Carpooling saves you money, results in less wear and tear on your car, reduces traffic, reduces the need for new or expanded roads, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, is good for your health (reducing stress unless you're an avid back seat driver!), makes new friends (or gives you time to read a book – or sleep).
43. **Keep your tires properly inflated.** Get better gas mileage. Under-inflated tires can lower gas mileage by about 0.2% for every 1 psi drop in the average pressure of all tires. Properly inflated tires are safer and last longer.
44. **Change your car's air filter(s) regularly.** Changing the air filter regularly helps prolong engine life because the air filter is designed to trap dirt and debris that can damage internal engine parts. Engine damage can occur from particles as small as a grain of salt and result in costly repairs. And it's not just your engine air filter! Replace your cabin air filter as well. It reduces the pollutants and allergens that get in your nose, and when it's clogged your engine has to work harder to heat and cool your cabin.



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## 100 Acts of Green



45. **Telework.** Offers even more benefits that carpooling. Not everyone has a job where this is possible, but among those who do, many report that they are more productive.



46. **Teleconference instead of traveling.** This is becoming more common as an alternative to face-to-face meetings. Each person flying from Baltimore-Washington to Orlando and back for a meeting contributes about a half a ton of CO<sub>2</sub>.
47. **Reduce your garbage** by 10% and your carbon footprint by 1,200 pounds a year. The average American produces 4.4 pounds of trash each day. That means the average family of four can generate 17.6 pounds of trash a day. Every year, Americans produce 254 million tons of trash. According to the EPA, for every ton of garbage processed at a waste facility, approximately one ton of emitted carbon-dioxide equivalent in the atmosphere is prevented.
48. **Donate your old clothes.** Instead of throwing them out. When you need something, consider buying used items. The production and disposal of textiles is resource intensive. Cotton is a thirsty crop, requiring 2,700 liters of water—what one person drinks in two-and-a-half years—to make one cotton shirt. Consumers throw away shoes and clothing (versus recycling) an average of 70 pounds per person, annually. A few communities have textile recycling programs, but about 85% of this waste goes to landfills where it occupies about 5% of landfill space and the amount is growing. See <https://www.wri.org/blog/2017/07/apparel-industrys-environmental-impact-6-graphics>.
49. **Use cloth towels.** If you approach your cloth towels and napkins conscientiously, cloth is the greener option. Some say that washing cloth must be more energy-intensive than using paper, but electric dryers are actually twice as energy-efficient as the manufacture of paper towels.

50. **Go paperless.** Most businesses, banks, utilities, and government agencies are capable of, and encourage you to get your bills and statements electronically. You'll be saving trees and the energy it takes to deliver your bills by truck.



51. **Print less.** If you have to print documents, set your printer to default to double-sided printing.
52. **Use recycled paper products.** When you need to use paper, make sure it's 100% post-consumer recycled paper, including paper towels and toilet paper.
53. **Recycle used printer, fax, and copier cartridges.** Stores like Staples and Office Depot offer rewards for used cartridges.
54. **Use reusable utensils, trays, and dishes.** Did you know plastic utensils cannot be recycled? They are all simply sent to the landfill, which is why it's great to purchase reusables. Convince your school district or office building to choose reusable utensils, trays, and dishes in the cafeteria.
55. **Organize to have healthy locally-sourced food served in your school district.** While you are trying to convince your school district to choose reusable trays and utensils, work on them about lower impact, healthy food.
56. **Pack your lunch in a reusable bag.** The choices are nearly endless. Certainly, you can find something that expresses your opinion or otherwise reflects your personality. Here are some examples: <https://amazon.com/s?k=reusable+lunch+bag>



# Bowie Earth Year 2020

## 100 Acts of Green



57. **Buy local foods.** To reduce the distance from farm to fork. Buy straight from the farm, frequent your local farmers' market, or join a local food co-op.

58. **Buy organic foods.** Keep the environment (and your body!) free of toxic pesticides and support farmers and companies that use safer ingredients.

59. **Grow your own organic garden.**

Or join a farm-share group. Harvest fruits and vegetables without having to go anywhere!

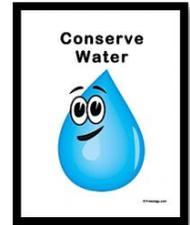


60. **Reduce your meat consumption** to curb carbon emissions from the livestock industry. If everyone in the country reduced their consumption of beef, pork, and poultry by a quarter and substituted plant proteins, we'd save about 82 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year. That would be a reduction of a little more than 1 percent. That action would also free up about 23 million acres of high-quality land, an area roughly the size of Indiana. The upside of eating less meat, incidentally, could go way beyond the environment – it would probably be good for your health. The Lancet Medical Journal reported that people in North America eat more than six times the recommended amount of red meat.

61. **Run your dishwasher only when it is full.** To save both water, energy, and effort at home. When doing dishes by hand try not to let the water run in between dishes.

62. **Conserve water**

**outdoors.** Only water your lawn in the early morning or late at night; even better, plant drought-resistant plants in dry areas and use water from rain barrels to take care of gardens and flower beds.



63. **Talk about environmental issues and the threat of climate disruption.**

“The most important thing any single one of us can do to fight climate change is talk about it,” says climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe (<https://cupofjo.com/2019/09/climate-change/>), who directs the Texas Tech University Climate Science Center. Train to be a climate ambassador through former Vice President Al Gore's Climate Reality project—or here's a good guide for starting the conversation with a stranger (<https://grist.org/guides/umbra-apaty-detox/your-next-bar-conversation-is-about-climate-change-heres-how-to-do-it/>).

64. **Form a “green team” at your office.** to explore cost-effective ways to conserve resources and promote sustainability

65. **Volunteer** for a local environmental group. Bowie's Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cLVzsDjYSGTTXC4P9-EOHNHoYR18iuLF/view>) and Green Team (<https://www.cityofbowie.org/965/Become-a-Green-Team-Volunteer>) are always looking for volunteers, as are many other worthy groups that advocate for local, national, and global environmental causes.

66. **Replace invasive plants** in your yard and garden with native ones. English Ivy and Bamboo are good invasives to start with.

67. **Slay the energy vampires in your home.** Vampire appliances use electricity even when they are off by going into standby mode. Examples: computers and related; instant-on TVs; surround



# Bowie Earth Year 2020

## 100 Acts of Green



sound systems; cable or satellite TV boxes; appliances with a clock like microwaves, DVD players, etc. According to the Department of Energy, vampire appliances and electronics account for 10% of energy used in an average home. Unplug appliances and electronics, especially printers, computers, cell phone chargers, and video game systems, when not in use. Use power strips that will turn off all appliances (TVs, cable/satellite boxes and DVD players) or electronics (all computer equipment) plugged into them. Go here to estimate how much your vampires are costing you:

<https://www.srpnet.com/energy/DIY/vampire.aspx>.

68. **Take the stairs** instead of the elevator to save energy – use your energy instead. You can also try parking your car farther from the store you're going to instead of circling the parking lot looking for the closest spot! Both of these actions are good for the environment, and probably good for your health!
69. **Use energy-efficient appliances and electronics.** The Energy Star Program can tell you how: <https://www.energystar.gov/>.
70. **Use electric or manual lawn mowers; switch to a mulching blade if** your mower doesn't have one – it's better for the environment, better for your grass, and less hassle than bagging cuttings. The City of Bowie has rebates available for your purchase of a mulching mower: <https://www.cityofbowie.org/376/Lawn-Mower-Rebates>
71. **Reduce fertilizer and pesticide use.** Much of what goes on your lawn ends up in the groundwater, or worse washes toward the curb and into the storm drains – which ends up in the Chesapeake Bay. Fertilizers create great conditions for algae, contributing to algal blooms, and pesticides wreck all kinds of havoc with marine life.
72. **Purchase an electric or hybrid vehicle.** Whether new or used, be sure to add electric and plug-in hybrids to your list of autos to consider. Both EVs and hybrids are more energy efficient, helping to lower GHG emissions and reduce total vehicle costs over the lifetime of the vehicle. Yes, currently they cost a bit more up front, but the savings accumulate substantially over time. No oil changes! And lower maintenance since the EV drivetrain has about 17 moving parts compared to the 200 or so in an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle. Less to break!
73. **Avoid single purpose trips.** Going to the grocery in the morning, the drug store at noon, and the hardware store in the evening means three trips there and back. Making the effort to plan and “batch” trips into one saves time, energy, and traffic woes.
74. **Capture wastewater.** Keep a bowl in the sink to capture water when prepping fruits and vegetables. It makes a great source of water for house and garden plants, particularly with organic matter added to the mix. This idea can be applied in many ways: catch cold water while waiting for the water to get hot and fill your coffee maker; the cold water that goes down the drain while waiting for the shower water to get warm could also be used to water the garden.
75. **Wash the car on the lawn** instead of the driveway (if you have grass and not native ground cover). Use dishwashing soap if needed; in small quantities, the phosphate in the liquid soap is good for the lawn, and it doesn't end up heading for the Bay via a storm drain.
76. **Mulch leaves on the lawn** by mowing them (easiest when dry), adding them to garden mulch for your plants, or composting to create good fertile soil.
77. **Turn off the shower water when shaving.** If you shave in the shower get wet, turn off the water, shave, and turn it back on to rinse. We used to call these “sea showers” since warships make their own water and it has to be conserved.



# Bowie Earth Year 2020

## 100 Acts of Green



78. **Avoid using the kitchen sink disposal.** Though grinding food scraps and having them removed via wastewater treatment facilities is better for the environment than sending the scraps to the landfill, it's even better to compost non-meat food waste. More on composting here: <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home> and good information about sink disposal use here: <https://dengarden.com/appliances/Garbage-Disposal-Myths>
79. **Flush wisely.** There are only two substances that should be flushed in a toilet - employ the adage "if it's brown, flush it down, if yellow, let it mellow." And those flushable baby wipes aren't really as flushable as you might think. They often gum up the machinery at water treatment facilities.
80. **Reuse pumpkins after Halloween.** Eat them, donate to zoos, animal shelters, farms, or community gardens, compost them, etc.!
81. **Don't heat or cool little used areas of your house.** Don't heat or cool your entire house, particularly those little-used areas. Close those vents the doors, and only open them when the room will be used.
82. **Manage the sunshine in your house.** Use reflective drapes to reflect the sun in the summer; in winter let the sun in during the sunny part of the day.
83. **Reduce the use of air conditioning.** On summer evenings, use two fans – one to force air out from the highest window in your house, the other to pull cool air in from a low window. During the day use the upper fan to vent heat out of the house. Attic fans and vents help vent these spaces, and good insulation in your ceilings can make a big difference. In a multistory home, a whole-house fan in the highest space does a great job.
84. **Let your grass grow longer.** Cut your grass at 3 -3 1/2 inches for tall fescue, 2 inches for all Kentucky Bluegrass, and 1 inch for Bermuda and Zoysia grasses. This is better for the grass, promoting deeper roots, and can reduce the need to water. Keep grass even taller during drought conditions.
85. **Plant white clover** to eliminate the need of most fertilizers. It stays short, covers the ground, and looks every bit as good as a grass lawn. There are many other low maintenance ground covers as well. For ideas see: <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/lawn-alternatives>
86. **Bank on-line – not in line!** Most banks now have phone apps that allow you to deposit checks on-line. They work by sending a picture of both sides of the check to your bank. Contact your bank for information. Also, most banks have programs that allow you to pay all your bills online. If the recipient isn't in their database they mail a physical check. In many cases there are no charges for this as it is included as part of your checking account.
87. **Buy sustainable flooring** like bamboo, cork, linoleum, and reclaimed wood.
88. **Say no to Styrofoam.** It takes up a lot of space and lasts almost forever in landfills! The City of Bowie usually holds an annual shredding and Styrofoam recycling event in the spring each year. Look for announcements about the event in the local papers or on this website. (Only hard Styrofoam like the kind found in the packaging of electronics, with glue and tape removed is accepted.) Some retail mailing companies (UPS, FEDEX, local mailers) sometimes accept Styrofoam packing peanuts, but not all and not always.
89. **Donate old eyeglasses.** When your prescription changes, or your lenses get scratched, or frames break and you replace your glasses, you can donate your old ones for those who need them. Here's a link that can connect you to the right organization: <https://www.readers.com/blog/glasses/donate-glasses/>



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## *100 Acts of Green*



90. **Recycle rechargeable batteries** at most hardware stores. Rechargeable are nickel–cadmium (NiCd), nickel–metal hydride (NiMH), and lithium-ion (Li-ion). Some businesses will recycle regular alkaline batteries as well.  
<https://momsorganicmarket.com/maryland/>
91. **Take your own cup or thermos to the local coffee shop.** Most stores will gladly fill yours up instead of one of theirs.
92. **Avoid cosmetics that contain polypropylene or polyethylene.** These are common forms of plastic that are used for used for a variety of purposes in cosmetics and personal care products, including as a binder, thickener, film-forming agent, emulsion stabilizer, and abrasive. They are safe for your skin (may cause some irritation), but when you wash your face they may end up in oceans, seas and freshwater bodies worldwide. Think microplastics in sunscreens.
93. **Frequent “Freecycling” groups.** Often appliances, building materials, various supplies, can be found for free – and that’s a good place to start when you are about to discard something. “One person’s trash is another’s treasure.” Bowie Freecycling can be found at:  
<https://groups.freecycle.org/group/BowieMD/posts/all>
94. **Support products, services, and companies value the environment.** Did you know that just 100 companies have been the source of more than 70 percent of global industrial greenhouse gas emissions since 1988? Fifty of them, unsurprisingly, are fossil fuel companies. Another list compiled by Forbes ranked 890 corporations based on seven priorities to see who was doing right by America—take special note of who ended up at the bottom of the list.
95. **Participate! Attend Town Halls, Listening Sessions, and City Council meetings.** Most members of Congress hold town halls a few times a year to connect with their constituents and update them on what’s happening in in their districts and nationally. Subscribe to your City, County, State, and National representatives’ newsletters, follow them on social media, or check their websites to find out what is happening. Most town halls include a question-and-answer portion, so if you’re ready to ask something, go prepared.
96. **Upcycle your furniture.** Keep those old dressers, tables, chairs, and couches out of landfills by refinishing, painting, or reupholstering them.
97. **Monitor your home energy use.** There are expensive retrofits to electrical service boxes that enable individual circuit tracking. But there are also devices that you simply plug your appliance into so you can see how much energy it takes to operate it. Borrow one from the City of Bowie today: <https://www.cityofbowie.org/891/Energy-Saving-Tips>
98. **Use rechargeable batteries when possible.** Rechargeable don’t hold a charge as long as alkaline batteries when not in use, so these are best for things that see a lot of use. And there are solar battery chargers available to recharge them!
99. **Buy less stuff!** That’s the bottom line. How much more stuff do you really need? You don’t have to deny yourself, but think about whether that new thing will really “spark joy” tomorrow, as Marie Kondo would say.
100. **Now you think of one!** If you can add to this list, send your idea to [bowieeac@gmail.com](mailto:bowieeac@gmail.com).