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From the January 14, 2008 Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly.

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Challenging initiative takes on global climate change

By David W. White Jr. and Philip Warburg

The state and nation are facing an unprecedented environmental challenge in global climate change. This challenge provides us with a real opportunity for a cleaner, healthier future. That is why the Massachusetts Bar Association and Conservation Law Foundation have launched a year-long "Eco-Challenge" to provide lawyers and law firms with the tools and guidelines to adopt greener practices that will reduce our collective impact on the environment.

We believe the legal community in Massachusetts can and should set the standard for how our state responds to global warming. Many law firms and lawyers have already taken some steps to reduce their carbon footprints and have committed themselves to greener practices.

We can learn from their success and push each other to do even better. How we, as a profession, respond to this challenge will help define a better future for generations to come.

To participate in the **Eco-Challenge**, attorneys will sign a "Lawyers' Environmental Pledge" and commit to implementing "Green Guidelines" developed by a task force of dedicated and committed lawyers. The guidelines suggest simple and accessible changes that lawyers and law firms can make to reduce energy use, adopt more sustainable practices and encourage employee involvement.

Specifically, law firms and lawyers participating in the **Eco-Challenge** will be asked to take action on energy conservation, paper reduction, recycling, greenhouse gas reduction, environmentally conscious purchases, sustainable practices, education and support for environmental conservation.

"Eco-Tips" and a resources page will also be posted on our website to help guide participants. In April, we will recognize those in the legal community who have already committed to changing their

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behavior by adopting the guidelines. To learn more and get involved, or to download the pledge and guidelines, go to www.massbar.org/ecochallenge.

For those of you who have been wondering where to start, the guidelines, Eco-Tips and Green Resources will provide a framework for success that will impress clients, motivate colleagues and provide tangible results.

Start small — for example, by buying more efficient light bulbs — and then move on to the larger, systemic changes —by re-assessing your purchasing choices, for instance. Encourage employees and friends to become partners in change by welcoming creativity and innovative ideas and by giving them incentives to drive less or recycle.

Every **Eco-Challenge** participant will approach the challenge of adopting all of the guidelines in different ways, but what will unite us is the fact that together we are taking comprehensive action to address one of the greatest threats of our time.

Our nation and world face an ominous future unless action is taken to curb global warming. The **Eco-Challenge** initiative will lay the foundation for a multi-year commitment by the legal community to addressing this threat. It gives us a historic opportunity to leave future generations with a cleaner, healthier environment. Please join us.

*David W. White Jr. is president of the Massachusetts Bar Association and Philip Warburg is president of the Conservation Law Foundation. For more information on the **Eco-Challenge**, go to www.massbar.org/ecochallenge.*

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