

## CASE STUDY

## NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND CORPORATE ACTION IN THE USA

Many high-profile US politicians, including President Trump, are climate change skeptics. As a result, citizens who care about the issue believe it is more important than ever to act in whatever ways they can to reduce carbon emissions (no matter how small the scale of action). Table 2.9 shows a selection of non-governmental US stakeholders and analyses the actions they have taken in response to climate change. Despite the US government's 2017 decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, civil society and business stakeholders believe they can still make a difference and are acting accordingly.

**Table 2.9** Examples of civil society campaigning in the USA

Individuals, businesses and places	Actions analysis
NextGen Climate (a civil society organization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NextGen Climate is an environmental pressure group whose mission is to engage politically with Millennials about the connected issues of climate change and clean energy. They advise potential voters on which politicians share their environmental concerns.</li> <li>The organization has a field operation in Las Vegas, which is viewed as being on the 'front line' of climate change in the USA: Las Vegas has doubled its consumption of water twice since 1985 and has suffered from severe droughts in recent years including 2016 (Figure 2.36).</li> </ul>
Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In recent years, increasing numbers of Las Vegas citizens and garden businesses have begun to adapt to what they perceive to be a permanent change towards even more arid conditions. Homeowners favour drought-tolerant 'desert landscaping' and are abandoning water-hungry grass lawns.</li> <li>In colder states such as Montana, individual actions could involve turning down a home's thermostat by 1°C; this brings a 3 per cent reduction in total household energy use. This action cannot be forced through legislation and relies on action by individual citizens. Government can, however, play a role by educating people about the issues.</li> </ul>
ExxonMobil (an oil and gas TNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite having much to lose if people were to abandon the use of fossil fuels, some US energy companies play an active role in supporting geo-engineering. Indeed, a corporate strategy of supporting CCS technology may be essential to their long-term profitability: it would mean consumers can keep using oil and gas while trusting CCS to remove anthropogenic carbon from the atmosphere.</li> <li>ExxonMobil has a long record of investing in CCS research: <a href="http://corporate.exxonmobil.com/en/technology/carbon-capture-and-storage/carbon-capture-and-storage/developing-cutting-edge-technology-carbon-capture-and-storage">http://corporate.exxonmobil.com/en/technology/carbon-capture-and-storage/carbon-capture-and-storage/developing-cutting-edge-technology-carbon-capture-and-storage</a></li> </ul>
Seattle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The city of Seattle has its own Climate Action Plan (CAP), which aims to make the city carbon neutral by 2050. Adopted in 2013, Seattle CAP focuses on city actions that reduce greenhouse emissions and also 'support vibrant neighborhoods, economic prosperity and social equity'.</li> <li>Actions are focused on areas of greatest need and impact – road transportation, building energy and waste: <a href="http://www.seattle.gov/environment/climate-change/climate-action-plan">http://www.seattle.gov/environment/climate-change/climate-action-plan</a></li> </ul>



**Figure 2.36** Las Vegas is on the 'front line' of climate change.

## PPPPSS CONCEPTS

Think about who has the greatest power to make a difference in relation to climate change. Is it the United Nations? The US President? TNCs? What arguments and evidence could help you make a case for each of these choices?