| **MSHSL Section 2AA**  **Speech Tournament**  **Discussion Tasks** |
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This is a LIVE document. Discussion tasks will be added throughout the tournament. Each task will post 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the round.

Discussion tasks will NOT be brought to rounds. Judges and contestants will be responsible for accessing discussion round tasks using this document.

| **Round 1 Discussion Task** |
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In late February 2022, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported that during

the 2021 drought, nearly 800 Minnesota farms pumped 6.6 billion more

gallons of water from ground sources than their permits allowed. The

penalties for this over-pumping were in many cases laughably minimal.

This is far from an isolated case nationally as more and more severe

droughts impact agricultural regions. As experts in the field of ground

water usage and viability, you are meeting at the behest of the Biden

administration to try and determine if there are any uniform solutions to his

issue. You are mindful of the balance that needs to be maintained between

all the relevant interests in those regions. Your determinations will be

forwarded to the current administration for their review and potential action.

| **Round 2 Discussion Task** |
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According to the US Geological Survey, globally since 1970, 83% of

freshwater species and 30% of freshwater ecosystems have been lost. You

are a group of international conservationists. Identify and rank the main

causes of freshwater biodiversity loss. How have those losses impacted the

environment and people? Using examples that have been utilized around

the world to protect and sustain remaining freshwater biodiversity, create a

list of strategies that will have the greatest impact. Your findings will be

used by advocacy organizations in their future conservation efforts.

| **Round 3 Discussion Task** |
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Numerous studies have shown that due to high-consumption lifestyles and

production practices, the highest income countries produce much higher

emission rates than middle and low-income countries. However, the

majority of the world’s population live in middle and low-income countries

which are most susceptible to climate impacts. You are preparing to publish

a journal article about reducing the effects of climate change on the

inhabitants of low-income countries. Consider the following questions.

What responsibilities do high, middle, and low-income countries have to

reduce global emission rates? What responsibilities, if any, do higher-

income countries have to lower-income countries in providing climate

adaptation and mitigation resources (monetary, intellectual, and

technological)? Which, if any, current global climate initiatives warrant

further support? Are there any other topics that will require further

investigation for the purpose of your journal submission?

| **Final Round Discussion Task** |
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According to best estimates, just 17% of owner-occupied homes in the US

were built after the year 2000. And that figure does not include rental

units. The energy efficiency of the majority of those residences built before

2000 is suspect. As members of the American Council for an Energy-

Efficient Economy, you are making it your mission to improve the efficiency

of that housing stock. Your goal is to develop a set of actionable items

which can be used to drive that improvement. You are fully aware of

potential cost issues and political pushback and will attend to those

concerns in your prioritized set of solutions.