

Arizona PIRG • Bonneville Environmental Foundation • Climate Solutions
Environment Arizona • Environment California • Environment Oregon
Environment New Mexico • Environment Washington
Environmental Defense – California and Rocky Mountain Region
Grand Canyon Trust • Natural Resources Defense Council
Interwest Energy Alliance • New Mexico Physicians for Social Responsibility
NW Energy Coalition • Oregon Environmental Council
Pembina Institute • Southwest Energy Efficiency Project
Union of Concerned Scientists • U.S. PIRG
Utah Clean Energy • Western Resource Advocates

Regional clean-energy advocates' statement on Western Climate Initiative's greenhouse-gas reduction goal

August 22, 2007

Clean-energy advocates from across the western United States and Canada today hailed leaders of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI) for taking a crucial step toward regionwide reductions in global-warming pollution.

Serious action is needed now to slow, stop and reverse global warming. Temperatures in the Western States have increased more than 1 degree Fahrenheit or 0.6 degrees Celsius in the past 50 years; if we do not act, increases of up to 10 degrees Fahrenheit or 5.6 degrees Celsius are predicted by the end of this century. Such warming will have serious consequences for the economy and other elements of life in the West, from agriculture and ranching to skiing, tourism and public health.

The WCI -- currently encompassing the states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and the provinces of British Columbia and Manitoba -- fulfilled its pledge to set an overall emissions-reduction target for 2020. The WCI target, 15% below 2005 levels by 2020, moves us toward the pollution reductions the scientific community says are needed to avoid the worst impacts of global warming.

Setting these necessary targets and timelines establishes the participating states and provinces as leaders in addressing this global challenge and positions their residents and businesses to take full advantage of the benefits associated with building a new clean-energy economy.

We look forward to working with the states and provinces to reach their next milestone in August 2008: developing and adopting effective policies, agreements, regulations and laws to ensure achievement of the WCI's reasonable and attainable goals.

As U.S. and Canadian decision-makers fashion concrete solutions to climate change, they should:

- Develop and support binding legal limits that advance emissions reductions across all sectors of the economy. A variety of mechanisms may be needed because of important differences between the various segments – transportation, electricity, agriculture, etc.
- Ensure that no new long-term financial commitments to carbon-intensive projects, such as conventional coal-fired power plants or major new road projects, are made in member states and provinces while policies and mechanisms are under development.
- Adopt policies that prioritize and accelerate the development of energy conservation and energy efficiency. We must use less energy for electricity, heating and cooling, and transportation. Then we must not miss any opportunities to develop the West's abundant clean renewable resources.

In coming decades, the region will invest hundreds of billions of dollars in energy and transportation projects to meet rising needs. The choice between investing in conventional polluting technologies or in advanced energy efficiency and cleaner renewable technologies will determine whether the West meets the governors' and premiers' goals, or irreparably damages the region's lifestyle, landscapes and economy.

Together, the people of the West already possess the necessary leadership, creative know-how and the technological tools to drive this new energy economy. The logical and necessary next step is to make the WCI goals real by establishing responsible limits for global warming pollution that apply to all sectors of the economy. We are enthusiastic about taking the next step with regional leaders and together building a better future ... for the West and for the world.