



Adopted October 9, 2007

Energy Coalition for a Sustainable Fox Valley (ECOS-Fox Valley)

Mission:

ECOS-Fox Valley is a group of non-profit organizations, businesses, governments and citizens that plans with and advocates for the Fox Valley region, for an energy future that is locally self-reliant and that sustains the regional and global environment.

Climate Change Position Statement

Introduction:

Global warming is a sustainability issue that will have unparalleled effects economically, environmentally, and socially.¹ An overwhelming majority of the scientific community agrees global warming, caused primarily by human activity, is occurring.² It is altering our climate and increasing the strength of weather events such as heat waves, droughts, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes.³ If left unchecked, it will generate extensive changes to our climate and environment.⁴ To preserve quality of life, it is essential we put effective policies in place that stimulate climate-friendly behavior. If we act now, we join organizations, cities and countries around the world in developing and using the broad range of solutions available to avoid the most severe impacts of global warming while improving our economy. This effort requires a civilization-wide response by citizens, institutions, governments and businesses. Wisconsin can prosper by leading the way.

Background

If we release less global warming pollution such as: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's) into the atmosphere, climate change will be less of a problem.⁵ CO₂, mainly the result of burning fossil fuels, is currently the primary heat-trapping gas causing global warming.⁷ According to National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Federal Climate Change Science Program commissioned by the current Bush Administration, atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ are higher than they have been for over 400,000 years.⁸ Top NASA scientist, James Hansen and Ralph Cicerone, National Academy of Sciences president, have stated that global warming is caused primarily by increases in greenhouse gases from CO₂, CH₄, and CFC's and other pollution due to human activities.⁹

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 60 to 80 percent by the year 2030 to stabilize greenhouse gases. Scientists at Environmental Defense claim that to avoid the Greenland tipping point, global emissions need to start declining by 2020, drop by 50% by 2050, and drop at least 75% by the end of the century.

The Joint Science Academies, made up of senior scientists from the major industrial countries of the world, stated in 2005 that "The scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify nations taking prompt action..."¹⁰ On February 16, 2005, 141 countries ratified the Kyoto Treaty, the international agreement to address global warming.¹¹ If the United States had ratified the Kyoto Treaty our nation would have agreed to reduce global warming emissions by 7% below the 1990 levels by the year 2012.¹²

Elected city officials are showing leadership on this issue. On March 30, 2005, in support of the Kyoto Treaty, 10 mayors, joined together to invite U.S. cities to take action to significantly reduce global warming pollution by signing the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. As of August 10, 2007 648 mayors, representing over 72 Million Americans had signed the agreement¹³

"America is ready for bold, innovative energy policies that will make us safer, more independent and better stewards of the planet. We've been asleep at the switch for too long-the time for action is now." – Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty, National Governors Association Chair, 2007-2008.

On August 10, 2007 the National Governors' Association adopted a policy position "NR-11. Global Climate Change"¹⁴. On December 20, 2005, governors of seven Northeast States (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Vermont) signed a global warming pollution pact to cut heat-trapping global warming emissions from the area's power plants and create new investment in cleaner, more efficient energy technology¹⁵. On February 26, 2007, the governors of five Western states launched a joint effort to reduce emissions of global warming pollution¹⁶. California has long enforced standards for automobile emissions and is considering legislation to mandate a cut in global warming emissions of 25 % by 2020.

"Historical records indicate the average global temperature increased by 0.5 to 1° Fahrenheit (F) between 1890 and 1990. In the next 100 years, scientists predict the temperature may rise another 2 to 6° F. Such increases have

occurred previous in Earth's history, but never over such a short time span. In fact the average global temperature has risen more in the last century than at any time in the past 10,000 years. – Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine, April/May 2000.

On April 5, 2007, the Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence was created by Executive Order 192. The office will be focusing on generating 25% of our state's electricity and transportation fuels from renewable resources by 2025; capturing 10% of the emerging bioindustry and renewable energy market by 2030; and leading the nation in groundbreaking research that will make renewable energy more affordable and will create good paying Wisconsin jobs.

ECOS-Fox Valley recommends the following:

- Educate the public (starting in grade school), our legislators, elected officials about climate change and the urgency to act now.
- Encourage regional renewable energy events to raise awareness of products and sources.
- Encourage the state to be a leader in the reduction of greenhouse gases.
- Support energy independence by increasing renewable energy sources.
- Support state and local grants and tax incentives for universities and other research entities, corporations, and companies to study, promote, provide, and use alternative forms of energy.
- Encourage tax incentives for universities and other research entities, corporations, and companies to study, promote, provide, and use alternative forms of energy.
- Encourage the development of light rail and efficient mass transportation systems.
- Support the establishment of regional and the expansion of local transit systems.
- Encourage the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that provide linkage to statewide trails and the development of local systems that encourage pedestrian and bicycle use.
- Encourage municipalities to incorporate and implement sustainable development principals in their smart growth comprehensive plans.
- Encourage sustainable forest management, the preservation of natural areas and the protection of water recharge areas.
- Continue to provide support for incentives that encourage homeowners and businesses to purchase and install energy efficient appliances.
- Encourage the Federal Government to adopt a stronger energy policy and be a leader in sustainable energy use and climate friendly practices.
- Encourage the reduction of emissions into the atmosphere.

Sources used: ^{1,4a}The National Academy of Sciences, ² Union of Concerned Scientists, ^{3a,10} Joint Science Academies, ^{3b} CRO Forum, ^{3c,4b} Time Magazine, ^{4c,5a,9} CBS News, ⁷ ^{8a} U.S. Climate Change Science Program, ^{8b} National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, ¹¹ BBC, ¹² Mayors office, Seattle Washington, ¹³ US Mayors Climate Protection Center, ¹⁴ National Governors Association, ¹⁵ <http://www.ceres.org/news/pf.php?nid=137>, ¹⁶ National Resources Defense Council.