

# **Proposed NWCAA Climate Change Program**

## **Climate Action Northwest (CAN)**

Updated February 11, 2009

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this climate change program is to create an evergreen (able to be changed) framework that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Island, Skagit and Whatcom counties.

### **Background:**

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Resources Institute (WRI) recommended that we limit the increase in average global surface temperature to 2° C or less above the pre-industrial level to avoid catastrophic warming of the planet. In order to this, we will need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

A recent analysis of the very latest, peer-reviewed science indicates that the pace and scale of climate change may now be outstripping even the most sobering predictions of the 2007 IPCC report.

What is happening at the State level: Legislators passed House Bill 2815 in 2008. It establishes the following limits and reporting requirements for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Washington State:

- Reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 1990 levels by 2020; reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to twenty-five percent below 1990 levels by 2035; and the state will do its part to reach global climate stabilization levels by reducing overall emissions to fifty percent below 1990 levels by 2050 or seventy percent below the state's expected emissions that year.
- The legislation requires mandatory emissions inventory reports and provides a framework for greenhouse gas regulation on a fast timeline.

What is happening at the Federal level: EPA has finalized the nation's First Greenhouse Gas Reporting System/Monitoring to begin in 2010. EPA estimates this regulatory program will cover approximately 85 percent of the nation's GHG emissions and apply to roughly 10,000 facilities.

### **Course of Action:**

Develop and implement a climate action plan for Board approval and funding that maximizes strategic partnerships and collaborations, minimizes duplication and meets and builds upon the State's mandate. To fully develop this plan, we will sponsor outcome-driven regional meetings with key stakeholders throughout our jurisdiction. The intent of the meetings is to create a tri-county, multi-jurisdictional organizational collaboration that will allow us all to pool resources, maximize efforts, and position ourselves for potential funding opportunities. The plan supports regulatory and voluntary actions that reduce GHG emissions and will address the following areas:

#### **1. Regulatory:**

- Stay abreast of State/Federal greenhouse gas regulation development and comment as appropriate
- Develop permit conditions for GHGs in coordination with state and federal requirements
- Assist/develop/verify GHG emission inventory annually for NWCAA's jurisdiction

#### **2. Planning/Land Use:**

- Inform planners/permitting departments about air quality and land use and building issues on an on-going basis

#### **3. Energy efficiency/Renewable Energy:**

- Work with stakeholders to achieve the rapid transition of buildings into high performance units
- Work with stakeholders (energy assistance office, opportunity council, Work Source, etc.) to develop and implement GHG emission reduction strategies
- Promote energy efficiency and economical ways for residents and businesses to reduce GHG emissions
- Support the development and capacity of renewable energy sources

#### **4. Transportation:**

- Work with transportation authorities and other transportation experts to develop strategies that encourage measurable GHG emission reductions from mobile sources

#### **5. Outreach:** is integral to all areas above and also includes the following:

- Schools – global warming school presentations, Cool Schools Challenge and anti-idling programs
- Climate Stewards and Carbon Masters volunteer training programs - volunteers to implement projects that reduce GHG emissions
- Work with stakeholders (i.e. non-governmental organizations, utilities, stores, etc.) to develop tools to educate customers about climate friendly products, to avoid duplication and to act as a clearinghouse
- Sponsor/co-sponsor sustainable business conferences (a minimum of one per year)
- Sponsor projects and activities

### **Outcomes:**

- Specific outcomes will be developed as each area is discussed in more depth.
- Feasibility and time frame for a course of action will be identified in the planning process and will be based on current staffing vs. alternatives (e.g. current staff, additional staff, contracted services, etc.)