

West First

Creating climate policy to ensure success for the West

Western North America is a special place, with wild open spaces and dynamic communities. But climate change threatens everything we love about where we live, work, play and raise our families. If we act now, we can use clean energy technology and energy efficiency to cut the smokestack and tailpipe pollution that causes climate change. At the same time we can create jobs, spur new economic development, clean up the air, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and guarantee the quality of life we need for a prosperous West.

Through the Western Climate Initiative (WCI), Western governors and Canadian premiers are crafting measures for regional climate protection. This market-based “cap-and-trade” system will be the first in the West to reward major companies for cutting their global warming pollution. It limits, or caps, greenhouse gas pollution at a given level. Utilities and companies that exceed their allotment are required to buy credits to cover their surplus from those that emit less than their allotment.

We urge Western governors and Canadian premiers to introduce a WCI cap-and-trade system based on the following principles:

- 1. Concrete goals:** Pollution reduction goals should be based on science. The WCI partners have adopted an interim reduction goal of 15% below 2005 levels by 2020. This is a reasonable first step toward meeting a reduction goal of 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 – the amount needed to avoid dangerous impacts of climate change.
- 2. Economy-wide cap:** To be fair and effective, the cap must be comprehensive. All major sources of global warming pollution should be included.
- 3. Public first:** Any revenues generated by the cap-and-trade program should benefit the public. Examples include assistance to low- and middle-income consumers, worker retraining, energy efficiency programs, renewable-energy research and development, and wildlife and natural resource protection programs.
- 4. Equity:** Workers, middle- and low-income consumers and communities should share the economic, health and environmental benefits of cap-and-trade, not shoulder additional burdens. In addition, no environmental standards should be weakened to meet emissions-reduction goals.
- 5. Next steps:** While a carbon cap is essential, a comprehensive approach to tackle climate change must be implemented if we are to meet the WCI reduction goals and timelines. In addition to the WCI, other carbon reduction strategies that are suitable for regional deployment include a Low Carbon Fuel Standard and a Clean Generation Performance Standard.
- 6. Economic Stimulus:** Climate protection policies, including cap-and-trade, should be designed to stimulate growth in the new clean energy economy and create new jobs.

7. **Timely action:** To achieve the interim reduction goal (15% below 2005 emissions levels by 2020), partner states and provinces should adopt the WCI cap-and-trade system by 2009 and implement the system, related legislation, regulation and complementary policies no later than 2010. Reductions and trading should begin before 2012.

I support these principles and strongly encourage the WCI partners to include them in the final design:

Name (Print) _____

Signature _____

Organization _____

Date _____

Address/City/St/Zip _____

Phone number _____

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