

Global Warming

There is no longer any question that human activity is causing global warming. The latest report by the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found (with 90% certainty) that the release of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases from human activity has played a central role in raising the average surface temperature of the earth by more than 1 degree Fahrenheit since 1900 and that without quick and effective action to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of these gases, the ecological systems we rely upon to sustain life will be in jeopardy. Global warming is the most serious environmental threat of our time. Already, we are experiencing global warming impacts worldwide, including more severe storms, prolonged forest fire seasons, floods and droughts, agricultural losses and increased human disease. The United States is the top global warming polluter in the world, with a 20 percent increase since 1990 of carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels and another 15 percent increase forecast by 2020 without a change in regulation.

Climate change directly affects our people and wildlife. If unchecked, global warming would have an impact on our water supplies and farming, wildlife habitat and human health. What dozens of states are already doing should be part of a coordinated effort on the part of all 50 states. For example, 13 states have adopted clean-car standards that would reduce automobile global warming pollution by 30 percent. In addition, nine Northeast states have a power-sector cap, and six Western states are designing their emissions regime. We need participation in these efforts by all 50 states and territories.

Global warming action not only helps protect our climate, but it also improves our economy, creating jobs and leaving consumers with more disposable income. Second, global warming policies also improve public health by eliminating harmful air pollutants.

We recommend the following actions at a minimum to address global warming:

- **Adopt** policies to comprehensively cap and reduce global warming pollution and to establish programs and standards for each major emitting sector to ensure that the cap is achieved.
- **Enact** clean-car standards similar to those in California and 12 other states.
- **Adopt** the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code as the national residential energy building code to facilitate ease of compliance and avoid inconsistent local standards.
- **Set** minimum efficiency standards for common appliances.
- **Adopt** a Low-Carbon Fuel Standard to reduce carbon emissions from vehicles.