



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

2009 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

CLIMATE CHANGE & REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS

ISSUE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports the commitment of federal funding and strong policies at all levels of government, incorporating and encouraging the work of multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations, to reduce the risk of climate change and to create climate resilient communities and regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Recognize and include local governments and multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations as partners in national efforts to reduce greenhouse gases (GhGs).
- Adopt climate change policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors including: transportation, the commercial and industrial sector, the built environment and the residential sector.
- Give carbon a monetary value, through a cap-and-trade system, and/or carbon fee or investment program, to encourage market solutions to reducing carbon dioxide emissions.
- Allow States and regions the authority to set stricter emissions standards and establish the appropriate regulatory mechanisms.
- Establish ambitious greenhouse reduction targets to encourage reduction activities and provide states, regions and local governments the incentives and resources they need to meet such targets.

REGIONS & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Direct a portion of auction proceeds from any national cap-and-trade or carbon fee program to units of local government and multi-jurisdictional regional organizations to support emissions reduction efforts.
- Provide urban, suburban and rural regional planning organizations (e.g. Metropolitan Planning Organizations, MPOs and Council of Governments, COGs) resources and tools to integrate GhG reduction into transportation planning
- Support the inclusion and necessary funding MPOs and COGs that practice “smart growth” and link transportation and land use planning which can reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and GhG emissions.
- Ensure a “Carbon Market Efficiency Board” or any such entity that oversees a cap-and-trade or carbon investment program to include membership from a multi-jurisdictional regional planning organization.
- Direct funding to multi-jurisdictional regional planning bodies to evaluate, plan and prepare for the impacts of climate change for the jurisdictions in their region.
- Enforce the requirements in the “Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007” (PL 110-140) that can be utilized at the regional-level by fully funding the Energy Efficient and Conservation Block Grant program.

GREEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Support incentives to encourage conservation and the development of renewable energy sources.
- Support the development and application of technologies that will reduce, capture and/or store GhG emissions and other air pollutants.
- Include a provision for federal, state and local governments, in collaboration with owners and operators of infrastructure, to inventory critical transportation infrastructure for national security and evacuation purposes.
- Support funding for a Climate Change Worker Training Fund – or Green Job Corps – for clean energy workforce development.
- Employ strategies to buffer the effect of greenhouse gas reduction strategies (e.g. energy cost increases) on lower-income populations.

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

- Increase research on the effects of climate change to U.S. regions.
- Create informational instruments to build widespread awareness about the risks of climate change and encourage more informed choices and behavioral changes.

BACKGROUND

Climate change is potentially the most serious environmental and security threat facing our nation today. In their role of transportation and air quality planners, economic development agents, and conveners of multiple jurisdictions across geographical areas, U.S. regional organizations and metropolitan areas play an essential role in reducing greenhouse gases and in preparing our country for the consequence of climate change. Since the passage of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C.), regional councils (RCs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) have played a critical role in the nation’s efforts to ensure clean air through short and long-term planning and implementation. NARC is committed to ensuring regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations have the tools and resources they need to address this international concern.