

The New England Climate Coalition's 10 Action Principles for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In August 2001, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers signed a groundbreaking agreement to begin reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in our region. They committed to the following broad goals: (1) By 2010 to reduce human-made greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels, (2) By 2020 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 10% below 1990 levels, and (3) ultimately, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to levels that the scientific community believes are necessary to avoid any harmful impact on the climate, assessed to be 75-85% below current levels. State and provincial governments now need to create and implement climate action plans to meet these goals within their jurisdictions. A broad coalition of organizations across the region has unified to promote development and implementation of climate plans that will meet or exceed the goals of this governmental climate agreement.

The New England Climate Coalition advocates that to make meaningful progress toward the deep long-term reductions needed to limit or avoid harmful climate change, the state and provincial plans must contain at least the following elements:

1. **By 2010, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to levels 10% below 1990 levels.** The international community is working to ratify an international treaty with binding commitments on most of the industrialized nations to reduce emissions to well below 1990 levels. The U.S. has failed to sign onto the treaty, but as the biggest emitter of heat-trapping gases, we must lead by reducing our emissions by at least the same percentage as the other largest polluters.
2. **The NEG-ECP's long-term goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75%-85% should be given a target date of 2050.** This timetable is necessary to keep CO2 concentrations under 450ppm and minimize global temperature increases.
3. **Each consuming sector should be responsible for at least its proportionate share of the targeted emission reductions.** Any changes to these responsibilities should be based on an explicit process, which justifies changes by the relative cost-effectiveness in each sector, and ensures that any short-falls in one sector are offset by greater reductions in another (the sectors to be included are transportation, industrial, commercial, institutional, and residential. This recognizes that the electricity sector targets will overlap.)
4. **The region and each of the states should establish a system of mandatory reporting of CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions by 2005.**
5. **Reducing emissions from the electricity sector as a whole by 40% from current levels.** Every plan should include provisions for reducing CO2 emissions from grandfathered power plants. Increasing the use or output of nuclear power is an unacceptable strategy for reducing electricity sector greenhouse gas emissions.
6. **The region and each of the states should set a target of 10% of electricity consumption from new, clean renewable sources by 2010, and 20% of electricity consumption from new, clean renewable sources by 2020.**
7. **Every plan should include a target of increasing energy efficiency in each sector by 20% by 2010.** The plans should consider more efficient generation of power, strong efficiency and conservation measures and greater use of combined heat and power and micropower options.
8. **The States should lead by example by:**
 - Purchasing 20% of state facility electricity from clean, renewable sources by 2010.
 - Greening the state fleet by establishing policies that require each vehicle purchased to be the model that emits the least CO2 and other air pollutants per mile traveled, while fulfilling the intended state function; prohibit the use of inefficient vehicles such as SUV's for non-essential purposes; and establish a schedule for replacing all state vehicles with the most efficient models available.
 - Reducing state government's energy use by 25% overall by 2010.
9. **Each plan should include long-term plans for controlling sprawl, which is one of the primary factors raising emissions from transportation and buildings.** At a minimum, this should start by incorporating an assessment of CO2 impacts into the state environmental review processes.
10. **Each plan should recognize the economic development and job creation benefits of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.** And, each plan should also recognize the importance of assisting displaced workers in making a successful transition to new employment.

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