



NEWS RELEASE
September 13, 2007

Contact: Stephen Saunders 303-880-4598
saunders@rockymountainclimate.org

Climate Action Panel Recommendations: Cut Emissions, Save Money

Denver, Colorado – After 10 months of work, the blue-ribbon Climate Action Panel yesterday approved 70 recommendations to reduce Colorado’s contribution and vulnerability to climate change. The recommendations point the way to cut the state’s emissions of heat-trapping gases 37% by 2020, compared to projected levels under current law. Preliminary analysis suggests that taking these steps could save the state a sum that may approach as much as \$3 billion between now and 2020.

“Over 100 leading Coloradans have worked on how we can do our share to protect the climate and keep this such a special place to live,” said Stephen Saunders, president of the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization. “They’ve identified lots of good ideas that will both reduce emissions and strengthen our economy.”

The panel approved 55 recommendations to reduce emissions, of which 33 were analyzed quantitatively to estimate their effects on emissions. All but three of the 33 were also analyzed to estimate their costs or cost savings. The analyzed measures were estimated to have a cumulative effect of reducing emissions by about 40 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2020, enough by themselves to achieve three quarters of the reductions necessary to meet the 2020 goal. The 30 measures analyzed in terms of their cost effectiveness were estimated to have a total net savings approaching \$3 billion between now and 2020, according to preliminary analyses. That is because the most effective way to reduce emissions often is to improve energy efficiency, which both cuts emissions and saves money.

The recommendations aimed at reducing emissions include:

- A recommendation that the governor establish a goal for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Colorado. The panel expressed its belief that the goals should be “in the vicinity of” a 20% reduction in emissions by 2020 and an 80% reduction by 2050, both compared to 2005 levels. The recommendation for 2020 would amount to a 37% reduction in the state’s emissions projected for that year under current law. If the 2020 goal were achieved, Colorado’s emissions in 2020 would be 93 million metric tons of greenhouse gases, compared to 147 under current law. Some other western states have already set statewide emission goals, including Arizona (45% below projected emissions in 2020), Oregon (44%), New Mexico (33%), California (28%), and Washington (28%).
- A 50% strengthening of the state’s renewable portfolio standard, so that investor owned utilities would have to get 30% of their power, and municipal and cooperative utilities

15% of theirs, from renewable energy sources. This is estimated to reduce emissions by 5 million metric tons in 2020.

- Expansion of solid waste reduction, recycling, and composting programs, to reduce emissions by an estimated 4.6 million tons in 2020.
- Major expansions of utility “demand side management” programs to reduce electricity and natural gas consumption by their customers, estimated to reduce emissions by about 4 million tons in 2020.
- Adoption of California’s motor vehicle emission standards for new cars and trucks, requiring for the first time that vehicles reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases. This is estimated to reduce emissions by 3.4 million tons in 2020.
- Reductions in emissions of methane (a greenhouse gas) from oil and gas operations, estimated to save 2.6 million tons by 2020.

The recommendations for adaptation to future climate changes include 14 that, together, outline a road map for dealing with the projected effects of climate change on the state’s water supplies. Another recommendation is that the state government assess Colorado’s particular vulnerabilities to climate change and develop specific adaptation plans.

Of the 70 recommendations, 61 were approved unanimously; seven were approved by a super majority, with fewer than five votes against them; and two were approved by a simple majority of the panel.

The work of the Climate Action Panel was supported and facilitated by the Center for Climate Strategies (www.climatestrategies.us) and patterned after similar efforts in which CCS was involved in other states, including Arizona, New Mexico, and Montana. The Colorado panel is the first such effort in the nation undertaken by a nonprofit organization rather than by a state government. The Rocky Mountain Climate Organization began organizing the Colorado Climate Project two years ago, to develop recommendations to be considered by Colorado’s new governor, General Assembly, local governments, water providers, and others. In his 2006 campaign, Governor Bill Ritter expressed support for the project and as governor has repeated that he looks forward to reviewing the panel’s recommendations.

The panel’s recommendations will be submitted to the project directors of the Colorado Climate Project, who appointed the panel, once the analysis and write-up of the panel’s decisions are finalized. The project directors will determine on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization whether to accept the recommendations. The recommendations will then be forwarded to the state government, local governments, water providers, and others.

The Climate Action Panel includes 34 Coloradans from local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. Counting members of the panel and six supporting policy work groups, along with others, 115 Coloradans worked to develop the panel’s recommendations. The Rocky Mountain Climate Organization is a three-year old mainstream coalition whose partners include 16 local governments, Denver Water, 17 businesses, and 10 nonprofit organizations. More information is available at the project web site, www.coloradoclimate.org.

-end-