



2008 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

CLIMATE CHANGE & GREENHOUSE GAS

ISSUE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports the commitment of federal funding and strong policies at all levels of governments to mitigate mobile source pollution and promote healthful air quality through energy efficiency and carbon capture and storage, particularly as it relates to climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

- Include local governments and multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations within all contexts of S.2191, "America's Climate Security Act of 2007," particularly for resource allocation, funding and decision-making.
- Support the inclusion and necessary funding in S.2191 to multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations that practice "smart growth" by linking transportation and land use planning thereby reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and CO2 emissions.
- Amend S.2191 to direct a portion of the cap-and-trade auction proceeds to units of local government and multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations to support emissions reduction efforts.
- Amend Sec.3304 in S.2191 to broaden the definitions of eligible uses to include any effort that reduces VMTs.
- Amend Secs. 3303 and 3304 for eligible funding recipients to include: "any state, regional, local or municipal government and government-sponsored entities with planning, zoning, and/or infrastructure maintenance and construction responsibilities."
- Amend Sec.2602 which establishes a "Carbon Market Efficiency Board" to include membership from a multi-jurisdictional regional planning organization.
- Support allocation of funding in Sec.4601 to "Climate Change Worker Training Fund" for clean energy workforce development.
- Require a portion of the Sec.4702 funding allocation to aid multi-jurisdictional regional planning and implementation of strategies to prevent and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Enforce the requirements put into law from the "Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007" (PL 110-140) on energy policies and incentives that can be utilized at the regional-level by multi-jurisdictional planning organizations, particularly by fully funding the Energy Efficient and Conservation Block Grant program (EECBG) at \$2 billion per year.
- Incentivize funding to multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations for performance and compliance with the Clean Air Act and the tightened National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- Seek coordination among federal agencies in environmental issues to assist with the mitigation of mobile source pollution.
- Encourage partnerships between federal, state, regional and local government, and public and private industry.
- 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 purposes.
- Support the development and application of technologies that will reduce, capture and/or store GHG emissions and other air pollutants which harm the environment and directly lead to climate change and global warming.
- Develop incentive-based programs for localities and regions to create solutions that will protect environmental standards and needs such as sustainable land management and development, building codes, infrastructure planning, water and wastewater management.
- Create nationwide information instruments - awareness and educational campaigns – reaching all levels of government and citizens focused on environmental quality by promoting informed choices that contribute to behavioral change.

BACKGROUND

Climate change is a global issue. The negative impacts of climate change to the environmental and economic survivability of our communities must be mitigated with sustainable solutions at all levels of government – federal, state, regional and local – demonstrating clear cut emissions reductions and overall energy consumption.

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. Many RCs are already tackling climate change in long-range regional transportation and growth planning, and determining how to capitalize on the growing clean and alternative energy technology economy and workforce. NARC is committed to ensuring RCs and MPOs meet necessary regulations through the easing of conformity planning requirements and advocating for more funding at the local level to slow climate change by reducing mobile-source emissions.