

June 3, 2008

TO: U.S. Senators

FROM: National Association of Regional Councils (NARC)

SUBJ: S 3036, the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act of 2008

Dear Senators:

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports strengthening the foundation of the historic Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act of 2008 (S 3036), which would make reductions in greenhouse gas. NARC is encouraged by the leadership of the Senate to see that the bill provides substantial funding and resources to local governments for energy efficiency, renewable energy, transit, Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction, traffic management and land use projects. We strongly urge that incentives and resources to local governments are bolstered and offered directly to multi-jurisdictional regions and regional planning organizations (regional councils, councils of governments and metropolitan planning organizations) which play a critical role in transportation, land use and environmental planning that impact regional, local, state and national environmental health, economic competitiveness, workforce development, and overall quality of life.

NARC, representing Councils of Government (COGs), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), serves as the national voice for regionalism – urban, suburban and rural – advocating regional cooperation as the most effective way to address a variety community planning, development, environmental and infrastructure issues. These multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations are responsible for billions of dollars in transportation planning and programming each year, coordinating projects and operations regionally throughout the country. These regional agencies are knowledgeable about the transportation and environment issues that cut across city, county and, often times, state boundaries. Their expertise in regional transportation, land use and smart growth financing, planning and development, and using new, emerging technologies will be an asset in the fight to improve our infrastructure, combat congestion, remain economically viable and minimize the impacts of climate change.

Please accept the following for consideration and inclusion during the debate of S 3036:

- Sec.2(18) State, regional, local government and multi-jurisdictional regional organization programs, including incentives, renewable portfolio standards, efficiency requirements, land use policies and other such programs typically implemented at the state, local and regional level are having and will continue to have a substantial and direct beneficial effect on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Sec.3(2)(G) encouraging complementary state, regional and local government policies and programs that promote efficiency and technology deployment or otherwise reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Title III.Subtitle A.Sec.303(b)(2)(F) Community forestry, open space/green space preservation, green infrastructure projects conducted by multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations should be considered domestic offsets like those described in the subparagraphs (A) through (D).

- Title V.Subtitle D.Sec.534. NARC supports the expansion of “green collar” job training funding to buffer the economic hardship of workers who may lose their jobs, helping them transition and take advantage of the clean energy economy. NARC advocates for a role and funding opportunity for multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations, particularly those that are experiencing a transition in workforce, to explore new and expand current workforce opportunities regionally in the fields of clean, renewable and sustainable energy.
- Title VI.Subtitle B.Sec.611(h)(1) 30 percent shall be distributed to State, regional (multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-state) and local government authorities for design, engineering, and construction of new fixed guideway transit projects or extensions of existing fixed guideway transit systems.
- Title VI.Subtitle B.Sec.611(i)(1) This must be clarified to specifically include multi-jurisdictional regions, regional planning organizations and MPOs as eligible recipients of such funds. MPOs, COGs and other regional entities are critical players in developing statewide and regionwide coordinated transportation and land-use plans that utilize the concepts of smart growth, demand management, advancing modeling and measuring VMT. These types of activities are done most cost-effectively and efficiently through the regional organization with positive VMT/greenhouse gas emissions reduction returns.
- Title VI.Subtitle B.Sec.611(j) To be eligible to receive funds under this section, projects or activities must be part of an integrated State-wide or regional transportation plan that shall –
- Title VI.Subtitle B.Sec.611(j)(2) More emphasis must be placed on data collection and modeling capacity at the local, regional, and state levels to better assess the projected changes of greenhouse gas emissions reduction under different scenarios, providing for improved state, regional and local mapping and climate change planning.
- The following comments apply respectively to – Title VI.Subtitle C.Sec.622(B) and Title VI.Subtitle C.Sec.623(4)(A), (B) and (C):
NARC is supportive of the specific uses delineated in determining the impacts of climate change on coastal areas, water resources and agriculture that involve research, promote planning and develop and implement adaptation strategies. With over four decades of proven successes, regional planning organizations are incubators and experienced stewards of this type of planning and implementation as it pertains to environmental and infrastructure issues. These organizations should be implicitly included in all such efforts within the legislation to address the local and regional impacts of climate change.

NARC supports the dedication of federal funding and resources with strong commitment and policies at all levels of government to mitigate mobile source pollution and promote healthful air quality through energy efficiency, smart growth, transportation congestion management, intelligent transportation systems, regional planning, and carbon capture and storage to reduce the impacts of climate change and greenhouse gases. Since the passage of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C), regional planning organizations and MPOs have played a key role in the nation’s efforts to ensure clean air through short and long-term planning and implementation. Many regional planning organizations are already tackling climate change in long-range transportation and growth planning. But more needs to be done. More opportunities and resources must be provided to multi-jurisdictional planning organizations for climate change adaptation planning and implementation, maximizing their effectiveness and strengthening our national infrastructure networks and communities.

NARC strongly encourages the inclusion of clarifying language which would explicitly allow for multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations and MPOs to be considered a direct recipient of “adaptation funding” (Title IV.Subtitle B.Sec.625) to aid their on-going infrastructure improvements, water and wastewater management planning, and any disaster functions that might arise from the effects of climate change. We must, as experienced in the cases of homeland security grant funding, move away from state pass through funding, which has proven to be cumbersome, misguided and not as efficiently used, to regions and regional organizations becoming eligible for direct funding. This legislation would provide a good opportunity to do so.

NARC commends your leadership, hard work and dedication to important global issues. We offer our assistance, specific multi-jurisdictional regional planning organization examples and any clarification that might be required. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Shannon Menard, Policy Manager, with questions. I can be reached at 202.986.1032 x 216 or fred@narc.org and Shannon at x 217 or shannon@narc.org. Thank you and best of luck.

Sincerely,



Fred Abousleman
Executive Director

Encl. Sampling of Regional Planning Organization climate change information

Regional Planning Organizations and Climate Change **A Sampling**

South Florida Regional Planning Commission – Hollywood, FL

<http://www.sfrpc.com/climatechange.htm>



“Global Climate Change” refers to a changing of the earth’s environment as we know it today due to the scientifically documented warming of the earth. Increasing levels of greenhouse gas emissions, both naturally occurring and emissions resulting from the human use of fossil fuels, are causing this warming.

The awareness of global climate change and the certainty that it is a reality has crystallized during the past twelve months. Concerns about reducing and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to potential climate change impacts are now central to the discussion of politicians, business people and citizens alike in the State of Florida and beyond. In Florida, these concerns are translating into increased action at the state, regional, and local levels.

Planning has its place in climate change preparedness. While the public sector’s focus to date has principally centered on action plans that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, there is also a need for adaptation planning to prepare communities to respond to the impacts of climate change, some of which will be caused by greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere.

The “Climate Change Community Toolbox” was prepared by the Council at the request of the Miami-Dade County Climate Change Advisory Task Force. It was made possible through the generous support of the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

The Toolbox is designed to help decision-makers understand how to carry out adaptation planning, how to conduct analyses of specific sectors and issue areas as the basis for focused response strategies and actions, and presents examples of adaptation planning options. It is expected that the Toolbox will assist communities in South Florida and throughout Florida to move forward and translate concern about global climate change into sound planning, policy and action.

Specifically the toolbox consists of three components:

1. Three plain language and visually interesting fact sheets that summarize the impacts of climate change on Miami-Dade County’s economy, community and environment. These are designed as public information pieces.

2. A sea level rise map atlas that contains maps to aid Miami-Dade County's Climate Change Advisory Task Force in understanding the magnitude and geography of potential sea level rise impacts to the County as well as what future these impacts may mean for infrastructure and land use planning. The maps allow viewers to ascertain which areas of Miami-Dade County are generally more vulnerable to sea level rise than others as well as which areas are likely to experience substantial coastal wetland loss by 2100.
3. A compendium of adaptation resources containing the most current and relevant adaptation processes, strategies, options and examples drawn from national and international sources.



Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Serving the National Capital Region

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments – Washington, DC

<https://www.mwcog.org/environment/climate/about.asp>

The COG Climate Change Program is one of the nation's first initiatives to address local greenhouse gas emissions on a regional level. While a growing number of individual cities and counties are moving forward to address climate change, this is one of the first programs to involve localities over an entire metropolitan area. The elected officials of the National Capital Region view this approach as one that will provide a catalyst for improving the environment.

The COG Board of Directors established the [Climate Change Steering Committee](#) (CCSC) to develop this new regional strategy. The CCSC will reflect input from an interdisciplinary body of existing policy boards and committees, including the COG Board of Directors, the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee, the Transportation Planning Board, the Chief Administrative Officers Committee, the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee, the Human Services Policy Committee, the Public Safety Policy Committee, the CAO Energy Advisory Committee, and the Intergovernmental Green Building Group. The CCSC reports to the COG Board of Directors and provides it with bi-monthly briefings. Visit the [committee page](#) to view the committee [calendar](#), [membership](#), [current documents](#), and [archived committee information](#).

COG resolution on federal climate policy. <http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/bV5fWF9W20080324073253.pdf>



San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) – San Diego, CA

<http://www.sandag.cog.ca.us/index.asp?newsid=510&fuseaction=news.detail>

SANDAG has been proactive in addressing climate change planning issues in the San Diego region by entering into an innovative partnership with the California Energy Commission to update the SANDAG 2030 Regional Energy Strategy and prepare a Climate Change Action Plan for the San Diego region. These efforts, along with commitments made in the recently adopted 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, are opportunities to address climate change measures that can be implemented in the region. In the coming months, staff will keep the Board updated on activities, legislation, and regulations related to climate change.



Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) – Sacramento, CA

<http://www.sacog.org/calendar/2008/03/06/climateaq/pdf/02d-Committee%20Charge%20Attach%20C.pdf>

CLIMATE CHANGE/GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION (State Requirement)

The issue of climate change is a timely one for SACOG to address as landmark legislation was passed in 2006 mandating the reduction of greenhouse gases in the State of California (AB32). The Attorney General's office has explicitly stated the need to address greenhouse gas emissions within the context of SACOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and its Environmental Impact Report. Federal regulations are also likely to follow soon, given recent court decisions on the matter.

Our region will be in a position to realize benefits relative to the smart growth patterns identified in the Blueprint project. SACOG will continue to have a critical advisory role working with the State on AB32 implementation, given the relationship between transportation and land use patterns and greenhouse gas emissions. Key tasks associated with this project will be continuing to monitor and provide input relative to the state's greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts and implementation of the mitigation measures from the MTP 2035 EIR that address climate change.

Tasks and End Products:

- Attendance at state AB32 advisory meetings and workshops and other local and regional climate change meetings (Ongoing).
- Meeting summaries and comments on studies and recommendations by the state and other organizations (Ongoing)
- Prepare agenda items for SACOG Climate Committee (Ongoing)
- Compilation of SACOG's own carbon emissions inventory. (July 2008)
- Recommendations for reducing SACOG's own carbon emissions (September 2008).
- Create a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Strategies Toolkit (March 2009)

- Create a public education program on individual transportation behavior and climate change (June 2009).
 - Report of carbon emissions associated with the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (December 2008).
 - Identify strategies to reduce carbon emissions through transportation pricing (Ongoing)
1. **CREATE A GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION STRATEGIES TOOLKIT**
SACOG, in conjunction with other key partners, shall produce a toolkit for local governments to use to take effective actions reduce greenhouse gas emissions over time. The toolkit will incorporate recommendations from the participants of the January 31, 2008 Climate Change Discussion workshop to identify which issues are important for the region and the tools and resources they would like to have available to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 2. **DEVELOP A REGIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN**
Within 3 years of adoption of the MTP 2035, SACOG shall, through a public process, establish a Regional Climate Change Action Plan that includes at a minimum the following components:
 - General discussion of the potential impacts that global climate change poses to the Sacramento region, with particular focus on potential impacts to MTP facilities, to the extent that such research is available;
 - A baseline inventory of total GHG (at a minimum, CO₂, CH₄ and N₂O) emissions directly and indirectly associated with MTP activities (MTP GHG emissions for the year 2005);
 - Calculated total MTP GHG emissions per capita in 2005 using the total MTP GHG emissions figure calculated above and the total regional population figure for 2005;
 - Total MTP GHG emissions per capita as a measure of the transportation system's GHG emissions. This measure shall be used to compare the global climate change impacts of future MTP alternatives with each other and existing conditions; and
 - Development of enforceable, feasible GHG emissions reduction measures to achieve reductions in total MTP GHG emissions per capita. Such reduction measures may include construction of new transportation projects, modification of existing facilities or services, incentive or funding programs, pricing strategies, regulations or any other actions that reduce GHG emissions associated with MTP activities.

Tasks and **End Products:**

 - a. Design a public process to help develop the Regional Climate Change Action Plan**
 - b. Compile a baseline inventory of total GHG associated with the MTP**
 - c. Calculate GHG emissions per capita associated with the MTP**
 - d. Develop GHG emissions reduction measures**
 - e. Prepare Regional Climate Change Action Plan**
 3. **CREATE A PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM ON INDIVIDUAL TRANSPORTATION BEHAVIOR AND CLIMATE CHANGE**
In conjunction with key partners such as local air districts, public utility providers, area chambers of commerce and others, SACOG shall create a public information program to educate the public about the connection between individual transportation behavior and global climate change, including transportation behavior modifications the public can

make to reduce their GHG emissions over time. SACOG shall include information on its website (www.sacog.org) that is focused on global climate change. The website shall identify actions the public can take to reduce their carbon footprint, and provide we links to sources of information on SACOG's Regional Ridesharing Program, which is designed to promote alternative mode use (carpools, vanpools, public transit, bicycling, walking, telecommuting) and other travel demand management strategies.

4. ESTABLISH A BASELINE FOR SACOG'S OWN GHG IMPACTS

Starting in calendar year 2007, SACOG shall measure and record the GHG emissions associated with its own operations in an accurate manner and in a format consistent with the California Climate Action Registry's own reporting protocol in order to establish a baseline against which any future GHG reductions may be applied. The report shall include the following elements:

- Indirect emissions from electricity and natural gas use
- Direct emissions from mobile source combustion (agency vehicles)
- Indirect emissions from business-related employee air travel
- Direct and Indirect emissions from employee commuting
- Indirect emissions associated with SACOG purchasing practices

SACOG shall continue to report on its own GHG emissions consistent with this format in subsequent years and track its progress in reducing emissions. Emissions reductions in future years will comply with the goals set in the Regional Climate Change Action Plan.

5. DEVELOP RURAL-URBAN CONNECTIONS STRATEGY AND CREATE BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT

Within 3 years of adoption of the MTP 2035, SACOG shall develop a Rural Urban Connections Strategy, to expand on and help to support implementation of, the Blueprint growth strategy and the MTP. The Rural-Urban Connections Strategy will utilize state-of-the-practice data collection, modeling, research and participation practices to develop a toolkit of best practices to promote land use practices in rural areas that are economically viable for land owners and local governments and environmentally sustainable. Issues to be addressed include, but are not limited, to: agricultural practices, natural resource protection, development practices that support agricultural and natural resource values, infrastructure needs in rural areas, energy production, and methods to promote jobs-housing balance (with a specific emphasis on effective jobsgenerating practices in appropriate areas.) The toolkit of best practices will include assessment of vehicle miles traveled and air emissions, including greenhouse gases. Building on local conservation efforts, the strategy will identify areas where mitigation for development should be directed to maximize the benefit of such acquisitions. Another important outcome will be the identification of environmental services, such as flood control, groundwater recharge, and carbon sequestration, which are enhanced through a comprehensive approach to urban and rural planning. It is anticipated that the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy effort will be completed within 3 years.



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Springfield, MA

http://www.frcog.org/pubs/landuse/Clean_Energy_Plan/PVPC-Clean_Energy_Plan_Ex_Summary_000.pdf

The Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan seeks a future where we minimize our impact on the earth's climate through the efficient use and generation of energy— energy that is safe, clean, ample, and helps sustain the economy. The Clean Energy Plan is part of a larger effort in the Pioneer Valley to create an ecologically sustainable region¹. This plan offers a path to a clean energy future, which will need to be implemented by communities, businesses, institutions, and even individuals, in their homes, backyards, businesses, and municipalities.

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission initiated this planning process in 2003 by analyzing local barriers to the siting of clean energy projects in the Pioneer Valley and inventorying clean energy efforts underway². This analysis and inventory highlighted the need for a regional strategic energy plan for the Pioneer Valley. In 2005, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments secured funding from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative to develop a clean energy plan for the region.

To help formulate this clean energy plan, project staff created an advisory committee known as the Pioneer Valley Renewable Energy Collaborative. Members were recruited from industry, planning, education, municipal governance, the not-for-profit sector, and the general public. This committee worked in conjunction with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments staff and volunteers to analyze the energy situation in the Pioneer Valley and to propose a path to a clean and safe energy future. Methods for this effort included data collection research and analysis, education, surveys, stakeholder analysis, and participatory planning.



Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) – Philadelphia, PA

<http://www.novaregion.org/DocumentView.asp?DID=1771>

Climate Change Initiative

1. Regional GHG Inventory and Forecast, Allocated to Counties and Municipalities
 - Serving as pilot for US EPA on developing
 - MPO-level inventory protocol
 - Wide range of stakeholders
 - Harmonize, coordinate, and support local efforts
 - Link to state efforts

2. Evaluate Greenhouse Gas Reduction Options
 - Evaluate cost, effectiveness, feasibility, and other implications of various GHG reduction strategies and activities
 - Result: a catalog of options to consider in policymaking discussions
3. Stakeholder Engagement for Action Planning
 - Activities to educate and engage regional stakeholders
 - Public
 - Elected officials
 - Business community
 - Work closely with partners
 - Goal: build momentum around climate protection and adaptation
4. Integrate climate change and energy concerns throughout DVRPC activities, e.g.:
 - GHG and energy implications of transportation investments
 - Elevate climate change & energy implications of DVRPC goals
 - Brownfield development
 - Ozone reduction
 - Transit-oriented development
5. Support for GHG emissions inventories and forecasts for government operations
 - Support, tools, & training for county & municipal officials to inventory GHG emissions associated with government operations
 - Existing project with state, federal, non-profit, and other organizations