



**MT Climate Challenge Document
The Strawman – A Working Draft of Ideas for Conference Participants
September 23, 2006**

To the readers and conference participants: A major goal of the conference is to construct a set of recommendations for Montana policy makers. As a starting point for this discussion, the conference organizers have prepared this “strawman.” The strawman draft is a compilation of challenges and solutions that various local, state and regional officials have used to approach climate change in their communities. Please see the endnotes for the documents most heavily drawn from for this draft. Beyond these sources, ideas and concepts were crafted based on feedback and dialogue among various conference sponsors and staff. We encourage all conference participants to review this document prior to the conference and hope you will use the dialogue box on the website to contribute comments or constructive criticism. Again, this is only a draft intended to stimulate conversation. It has not been endorsed by any of the sponsoring organizations or any other group or individual. The job of this conference is to debate the ideas here, and to reject, accept or change them. We look forward to hearing from you. ~ MT Climate Challenge Staff

I. Challenges (Preamble)

- Montana has experienced significant droughts across much of the region; reduced snow pack; and altered precipitation patterns; severe forest and rangeland fires; warmer temperatures; and forest diseases. Climate change and variability have greatly contributed to these impacts.
- National Academies of Science from the major nations of the world have agreed that science supports the fact that climate change is occurring, is influenced by human activity and presents risks that should be addressed through changed practices and preparation for changed conditions.
- Climate change could have severe economic and environmental impacts on Montana in the coming decades, including effects on agriculture and tourism, infrastructure (including dams, roads, water and sewer), changed fisheries and wildlife, water shortages, and soil erosion. Montana’s fish and wildlife habitats are changing, affecting the accessibility and viability of certain species.
- Resource development, and the revenue it generates, are potentially negatively affected as a result of climate change;

- The opportunities to deploy clean and renewable energy and energy efficiency are abundant in Montana and may economically and environmentally benefit Montana by increasing energy efficiency, improving air quality, saving costs, providing jobs, increasing revenues, and reducing water pollution.
- Montana – a progressive leader in state level action – is strongly positioned to become a key producer in the emerging clean, renewable fuels economy. The economic benefit of this quantity of money flowing through our regional and local economies rather than to foreign countries is worthy of considerable attention of both public and private leaders and citizens alike.
- A Montana-specific comprehensive plan is necessary to address these issues, prevent or mitigate negative effects of climate change, and address economic effects on the state will help save lives, protect public health, preserve economic and resource development, and protect valuable infrastructure.

II. Solutions

General Approach

- The Conference supports the development of local, state, regional, and national programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a manner that : 1) is consistent with the findings of scientific research; 2) will not significantly harm the US economy; and 3) will encourage comparable action by other nations that are major trading partners and key contributors to global emissions.

A. Energy

1. Vision – Goals – Preamble

- It is critical for Montana to insure a long-term uninterrupted flow of transportation fuel by developing clean, renewable energy sources, including ethanol, clean diesel, bio-diesel, electricity used in electric vehicles, and plug-in hybrids.
- Use of clean, renewable fuels will require development of adequate infrastructure including vehicle systems, vehicle refueling facilities, distribution, storage facilities, refineries, and conversion facilities.
- Transportation fuels and oil imports are of grave concern to Montana consumers and businesses because of shortages and price spikes. The dependence on imported oil leaves Montana vulnerable to oil supply shocks and reliant on the willingness of others to provide sufficient supplies of oil.
- Significantly increasing the use of domestically produced bio-fuels, including ethanol and bio-diesel, offers both immediate and potential long-term solutions to price and supply vulnerabilities for families and businesses.
- Locally produced bio-fuels would benefit Montana by creating jobs, keeping dollars in the United States, and lowering the environmental impacts associated with fossil fuel production and use.
- Traditional resources such as oil, natural gas, coal and hydropower have played and will continue to play a significant role in meeting Montana's future energy needs.

- At the same time, resources such as energy efficiency, solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and advanced coal technologies are relatively untapped but hugely promising. Together, the combination of these resources provides the foundation for a clean, diversified and secure energy future for Montana.

2. Process – Pieces – Resolutions

- The Conference supports state-level policies on global climate change that are consistent with efforts to develop cost-effective clean, renewable energy sources and more efficient use of energy in mobile and stationary sources.
- The Conference supports reversing our dependence on foreign oil supplies.
- The Conference only endorses technologies for coal use that include measures to capture and safely store resulting greenhouse gas emissions, most notably carbon dioxide.
- The Conference endorses coal mining when it utilizes best available practices to minimize harm to the environment and full reclamation of all disturbed lands.
- The Conference supports diversifying our reliance on petroleum and natural gas by developing bio-fuels.
- The Conference supports continued research, development, and demonstration of fuel cell technology, a critical component for using clean, renewable fuels.
- The Conference promotes the use of regionally produced clean fuel substitutes to enhance the local, regional, national, and global environment.
- The Conference supports tax-credits for the production and implementation of renewable technologies, with complimentary policies for consumer-owned utilities and tribes.
- The Conference supports a reliable transmission and distribution grid – undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner.
- The Conference supports the use of clean, renewable energy by, for example, investing in “green tags,” advocating for the development of renewable energy resources, and recovering landfill methane for energy production.
- The Conference supports municipalities creating an inventory of city operations, and the community, then setting reduction targets and creating an action plan.
- The Conference supports making energy efficiency a priority through building code improvements, retrofitting city facilities with energy efficient lighting and urging employees to conserve energy and save money.
- The Conference supports sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED program or a similar system.
- The Conference supports increasing the average fuel efficiency of government fleet vehicles; reducing the number of vehicles; launching an employee education program including anti-idling messages; and converting diesel vehicles to bio-diesel.
- The Conference supports implementing an energy efficient statewide recycling program.

B. Agriculture

1. Vision – Goals – Preamble

- Leading agricultural and industry experts assert that existing production methods can result in meeting approximately 8-10% of the nation’s transportation fuel needs.

- Amounts significantly beyond this level will require new technologies and production methods including the use of cellulosic feedstocks such as corn stover, grasses, woody crops, forestry residues, components of municipal solid waste, and other biomass.
- Diversifying agricultural methods will also serve to reduce GHG emissions through carbon sequestration.

2. Process – Pieces – Resolutions

- The Conference supports the implementation of greenhouse gas mitigation tools such as carbon sequestration that have broad public support and potential economic benefit and can help address the unique conditions of Montana.
- The Conference recognizes the need to be able to proactively respond to short-term climate change and variability, e.g. drought, forest fires, significant precipitation events, and extreme heat events.
- The Conference supports expanding economic opportunities through the production and distribution of domestic renewable fuels to all regions of Montana.
- The Conference supports efforts to use agricultural techniques and processes in the Montana to produce, distribute and sell clean, renewable fuels.
- The Conference supports the increased use of biomass for bio-fuel (corn stover, grasses).
- The Conference supports continued efforts in cellulosic bio-fuels research that would enable the replacement of substantial quantities of imported oil with ethanol.

C. Forests

1. Vision – Goals – Preamble

- Prolonged periods of drought, coupled with decades of forest mismanagement, have created highly flammable conditions within Montana’s forests.
- Healthy, functioning forests are a major tool for reducing greenhouse gasses through carbon sequestration, acting as “carbon sinks.”
- Loss of these “sinks” through catastrophic forest fires will severely cripple their ability to function as a GHG mitigation tool.
- Using the excessive biomass located in our forests could reduce the threat of forest fires and provide a cache of fuel sources in developing clean, renewable energy.

2. Process – Pieces – Resolutions

- The Conference recognizes the need to be able to proactively respond to short-term climate change and variability, e.g. drought, forest fires, significant precipitation events, and extreme heat events.
- The Conference supports efforts to use natural resources (biomass) in the western US to produce, distribute and sell clean, renewable fuels.
- The Conference supports the increased use of biomass for bio-fuel (woody crops, forestry waste).
- The Conference recognizes the need to address the excessive fuel build up in our national forests after years of mismanagement.
- The Conference recognizes that forest management in fire-adapted ecosystems requires site-specific analysis and prescriptions tailored to the opportunities and constraints of the

site. In locations where forest management interventions present the potential for long-term economic or social benefits, forest vegetation can be manipulated for a variety of purposes, including the reduction of fire severity or the protection of critical resource attributes from wildfire damage.

D. Wildlife

1. Vision – Goals – Preamble

- Native wildlife populations are severely threatened by global warming.
- Critical habitats for myriad species have suffered degradation due to climate change in recent years.
- Restoration of habitats, with special attention to the need for buffers, corridors, and adaptive management, will help ensure that abundant native wildlife populations persist for future generations.

2. Process – Pieces – Resolutions

- The Conference supports the adoption and enforcement of land-use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space and create compact, walkable urban communities.
- The Conference supports healthy urban forests to promote wildlife health and diversity.
- The Conference supports strongly petitioning for federal and state funding for habitat and wildlife protection.
- The Conference supports a fully funded public education campaign on the need protect wildlife from global warming.
- The Conference supports a three-prong approach to wildlife and habitat protection: preservation, mitigation, restoration.
- The Conference encourages hunters and anglers, when possible, to purchase locally produced equipment and utilize more efficient vehicles for hunting and fishing outings.

E. Recreation/Tourism/Lifestyles

1. Vision – Goals – Preamble

- Many cities and communities through out the nation, both large and small, are reducing global warming pollutants through programs that provide economic and quality of life benefits such as reduced energy bills, green space preservation, air quality improvements, reduced traffic congestion, improved transportation choices, and economic development and job creation through energy conservation and new energy technologies.

2. Process – Pieces – Resolutions

- The Conference promotes transportation options such as bicycle trails; commute trip reduction programs; incentives for car pooling; and public transit.
- The Conference supports healthy urban forests to promote wildlife diversity; the urban aesthetic; and promoting tree planting to increase shading and absorb CO₂; which in turn promotes healthy lifestyles and attracts tourists.
- The Conference supports sustainable alternative transportation.

- The Conference supports hunting and fishing in a low-impact manner.
- The Conference supports the promotion of non fuel-consumptive activities.
- The Conference supports closing “the consumer loop” – supporting tactics to close the loop on imported products and encourage locally purchased wares.
- The Conference supports educational outreach to all Montanans, emphasizing the importance of knowing where products are made, and encouraging the purchase of Montana-made products to reduce energy use.
- The Conference supports the philosophy of “Reduce-Reuse-Recycle”
- The Conference supports local establishments, farms, businesses – that in turn support local suppliers, growers, etc.
- Conference supports community run “Farmer’s Markets”
- Conference supports community run markets such as a Co-op

SOURCES:

- Alaska Climate Resolution (2006)
- Western Governors’ Association Policy Resolution 06-10 (June 11, 2006)
- Western Governor’s Association Policy Resolution 06-3 (June 13, 2006)
- Western Governor’s Association Policy Resolution 06-20 (June 13, 2006)
- US Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement (March 30, 2005)