



Frequently Asked Questions: Western Climate Initiative

What is the Western Climate Initiative?

The Western Climate Initiative (WCI) is a collaborative effort between seven western states and three Canadian provinces to develop regional strategies to reduce global warming pollution. As of April 2008, the states involved include Arizona, California, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington; and the Canadian provinces include British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec.

What is the goal of the WCI?

The Governors and Premiers adopted a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions across the region 15% below 2005 levels by 2020 from all major sources.

How will the WCI partners meet their goal?

By August 2008, the Governors and Premiers will complete the design of a region-wide market-based plan to meet the 15% reduction goal. They will sign a Memorandum of Agreement that will commit each state and province to implement the plan. Each state and province will develop their own strategy for meeting the regional agreement, and in many cases will require either new regulations or new legislation. Full implementation of the region-wide market based plan will likely occur in 2012.

What will the WCI plan do?

The major element plan will be the establishment of a system that would set a cap on greenhouse gases across the seven states and three provinces, and then allow companies to buy or trade pollution credits to meet the required cap. The WCI cap-and-trade system will be the first in the West to reward major companies for cutting their global warming pollution. It will also be the first program in the country that caps greenhouse gases from all major sectors of the economy, not just electric utility companies. Utilities and companies that exceed their allotted pollution credits are required to buy credits to cover their surplus from those that emit less than their allotment. The process aims to reduce pollution and spur investment in clean technologies.

The plan will also identify a number of complementary policies for states and provinces to adopt to help meet the regional goal. This will likely include measures to reduce

emissions from sources that may not be good candidates for a regional cap and trade program, or where an alternate system of regulation is more appropriate.

How will the WCI integrate with a federal climate plan?

The WCI gives state and provincial partners an opportunity to lead their nations by shaping meaningful climate policy for the West that guarantees success for the region, and that serves as a strong model.

The WCI partners are committed to finalizing a plan that can be integrated into a federal or international cap and trade program, once such a program is adopted by Congress. Given the aggressive timeframe of the WCI process, the regional cap and trade program will likely inform the next version of federal climate legislation that will be debated by the new Congress of the United States starting in 2009.

What is the role of the National Wildlife Federation?

National Wildlife Federation works with a large diverse coalition of organizations called the Western Climate Advocates Network (WeCAN). As a coalition, we are working closely with WCI partner states and provinces to ensure that the final WCI plan meets the 15% reduction goal, and sets the region on a course for steadily reducing greenhouse gas emissions beyond 2020. Our second priority is to ensure that any money generated by a cap and trade system through an auction goes toward programs that benefit the public. This can include investing in efficiency and renewable energy programs, providing assistance to low and fixed income energy consumers, and protecting critical natural resources that are being affected by a warmer climate.

How can my organization or community get involved?

National Wildlife Federation, in coordination with WeCAN, is developing a number of ways for organizations and individuals to comment on and influence the WCI process. If your organization wants to voice support for a strong regional climate plan, please consider signing onto WeCAN's principles called *West First: Creating Climate Policy to Ensure Success for the West*. If your community wants to get involved in this exciting campaign, visit NWF's website at www.nwf.org/westernclimateinitiative, or contact David Dittloff in NWF's Boulder, Colorado office at 303-786-8001, ext. 15, or dittloff@nwf.org.