



Guidance Position Statement

Commitment to Climate Protection

Statement of Purpose

The American Public Works Association (APWA) seeks to encourage the public works communities, its professionals and practitioners, policy makers and decision makers at all level of government and the public at-large, of its position on the need to commit to actively engaging in the discussion and formulation of effective action strategies to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases within our communities.

Statement of Position

1. APWA believes the most effective course of action is for APWA public sector members to work within their organizations to commit to climate protection by signing on to the U.S Conference of Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, becoming a member of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and adopting their 5 Milestones for Climate Mitigation methodology (<http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=810>), verifying their emissions annually through an independent third party, and publicly reporting their emission reduction efforts through membership in The Climate Registry (<http://www.theclimateregistry.org/>); and
2. APWA believes that APWA private sector members, such as consulting firms doing business with local governments, should commit to publicly reporting their emission reduction efforts through membership in The Climate Registry (<http://www.theclimateregistry.org/>)

Background and Rationale

There is a scientific consensus linking greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human activities to global climate change. Each year more and more evidence comes to light supporting the case that the release of GHG emissions, predominantly from the combustion of fossil fuels, is causing observed changes in air, land and ocean temperatures, weather patterns, glaciers and ice sheets, oceans and sea level. The detrimental impact of these changes to both humans and the environment makes this the most important issues of our time.

Local government leaders have long recognized the important role they play in controlling energy use within government operations and in influencing energy usage within the community. Rather than waiting for legislative action at the federal level, local government leaders working through the U.S. Conference of Mayors launched the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement (<http://usmayors.org/climateprotection/agreement.htm>) in 2005 to advance the goals of the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement to address climate change. Conference Advisory Board Chair Seattle Mayor Greg Nickles was the first mayor to sign the agreement and since that time over 970 other mayors have followed pledging to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012, and to take the following 12 actions in their communities:

1. Inventory greenhouse gas emissions in City operations and in the community, set reduction targets and create an action plan.
2. Adopt and enforce land-use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, and create compact, walk able urban communities;
3. Promote transportation options such as bicycle trails, commute trip reduction programs, incentives for car pooling and public transit;
4. Increase the use of clean, alternative energy by, for example, investing in “green tags”, advocating for the development of renewable energy resources, recovering landfill methane for energy production, and supporting the use of waste to energy technology;
5. Make energy efficiency a priority through building code improvements, retrofitting city facilities with energy efficient lighting and urging employees to conserve energy and save money;
6. Purchase only Energy Star equipment and appliances for City use;
7. Practice and promote sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program or a similar system;
8. Increase the average fuel efficiency of municipal fleet vehicles; reduce the number of vehicles; launch an employee education program including anti-idling messages; convert diesel vehicles to bio-diesel;
9. Evaluate opportunities to increase pump efficiency in water and wastewater systems; recover wastewater treatment methane for energy production;
10. Increase recycling rates in City operations and in the community;
11. Maintain healthy urban forests; promote tree planting to increase shading and to absorb CO₂; and
12. Help educate the public, schools, other jurisdictions, professional associations, business and industry about reducing global warming pollution.

ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, established in 1993, is a membership association of more than 500 U.S. local governments, and more than 1100 world wide, committed to climate protection and sustainability. ICLEI is committed to achieving significant reductions in GHG emissions by assisting local governments develop and implement climate protection programs within their organizations. Their climate mitigation program includes a *5 Milestones for Climate Mitigation* methodology that provides a standardized program for 1) identifying the baseline emissions inventory and forecast, 2) adopting emission reduction targets, 3) developing a climate action plan, 4) implementing climate action strategies, and 5) monitoring and verifying climate mitigation results. ICLEI has developed software programs to assist local governments with their climate protection efforts; their *Clean Air Climate Protection (CACP)* software is used to calculate GHG emissions; and their *Design Support Tool (CAPP)* software is used to assist with the development of viable action strategies. Other useful tools and resources include their *Local Government Operations Protocol (LGOP)*, the official standard for local governments to quantify and report greenhouse gas emissions resulting from government operations. The purpose of the LGOP is to:

1. Enable local governments to develop emissions inventories following internationally recognized GHG accounting and reporting principles with attention to the unique context of local government operations;
2. Advance the consistent, comparable and relevant quantification of emissions and appropriate, transparent, and policy-relevant reporting of emissions;
3. Enable measurement towards climate goals;
4. Promote understanding of the role of local government operations in combating climate change; and
5. Help to create harmonization between GHG inventories developed and reported to multiple programs.

The LGOP has been approved by the boards of ICLEI USA, the California Climate Action Registry, the California Air Resources Board, and The Climate Registry.

The Climate Registry was established in 2007 as a non-profit collaboration among North American states, provinces, territories and Native Sovereign Nations that sets consistent and transparent standards to calculate, verify and publicly report GHG emissions into a single registry. The Climate Registry is a voluntary GHG reporting program whereby members agree to report their GHG emissions (CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFCs, PFCs, and SF₆) on an annual basis, use a third-party Verifier to assess their emission reports annually, and once verified, share the emission reports with the public. The Climate Registry developed the *General Reporting Protocol (GRP)*, a guidance document on how to calculate and report GHG emissions, to ensure the complete, consistent, transparent, and accurate measurement and reporting of GHG emissions. The LGOP referenced above relies heavily on the requirements contained in the GRP and is tailored to local government operations. It is strongly recommended that local governments join the Climate Registry as a means to encourage local governments to measure and publicly report their GHG emissions annually so that they can assess their progress. Likewise, it is strongly recommended that consulting firms, such as professional architectural and engineering firms, doing business with local governments are also encouraged to join The Climate Register as a means to measure and publicly report their GHG emissions annually so that they can assess their progress.

Sponsor

Center for Sustainability