



News Release

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Energy Policy Initiatives Center Releases Findings for Local Government Options to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the San Diego Region

Reports evaluate local policy options to reduce electric and natural gas use and transportation impacts

San Diego, Calif., October 27, 2009—The Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC), a research center at the University of San Diego (USD) School of Law, today released two reports that evaluate a range of local policy options to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the two largest sources: buildings and personal transportation such as cars and trucks. The reports, which build on EPIC's regional greenhouse gas inventory project, estimate the potential greenhouse gas reductions and costs associated with local policies to reduce transportation fuel use, distances driven by regional cars and trucks, electric and natural gas use, and to encourage distributed solar photovoltaics.

"This is the first attempt in our region to provide local policymakers with information about specific policy options," said EPIC Director Scott Anders. "We undertook this project to provide fact-based information about the range of options available to local government decision makers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within their communities."

EPIC evaluated a range of policy options based on the reasonable potential to reduce emissions, the cost of implementation, the time to implement, and the experience of other local governments. By benchmarking local governments that have implemented similar policies, EPIC was able to determine how much each policy option would contribute to reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, the statewide target adopted in the California Global Warming Solutions Act (2006).

The project was funded by a grant from the San Diego Foundation's Environment Program and Blasker-Rose-Miah Fund. The fund supports research that enhances our understanding of the potential local impacts of global climate change, and identifies ways to reduce our local greenhouse gas emissions in order to minimize climate change impacts.

"The San Diego Foundation is pleased to have supported this critical new research," said Senior Director, Environment Analysis & Strategy Dr. Emily Young. "EPIC's work will further our efforts to raise awareness and catalyze comprehensive local action on climate change."

"Based on our study, it is clear that to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation we must increase use of public transportation and pursue electric-based vehicle options. To reduce emissions associated with buildings we must increase efficiency in existing buildings, particularly in the residential sector," said Anders. "Also, regardless of the relative cost effectiveness of the policies we evaluated, it appears that implementing all of them to some degree may be necessary to reach our long-term emissions reduction targets."

Key findings of the study include the following:

- Statewide and federal efforts to reduce GHG emissions from building energy use and personal transportation are not likely to deliver sufficient savings for the region to reduce its emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Therefore, a role exists for local policy to meet these and long-term emission reduction targets.
- A range of policy options exists within the authority of local governments to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.
- Mass transit has the largest potential to reduce emissions in on-road transportation sector (cars and trucks). Telecommuting also could significantly reduce emissions.
- Other transportation measures such re-timing traffic signals and replacing stop intersections with roundabouts can also reduce emissions, though the potential is relatively low.
- Electric-based transportation options have significant potential to reduce GHG emissions regionally, depending on the rate of market penetration and carbon-intensity of the electric supply.
- Road pricing strategies (such as the one used on I-15) could reduce GHG emissions significantly by 2020.
- Reducing electric and natural gas consumption in buildings through efficiency retrofits has significant potential to reduce GHG emissions.
- Efficiency retrofits in the commercial sector are more cost effective than those in the residential sector, but it appears that both are necessary to reach long-term reduction targets.
- A combination of local policies and federal and statewide efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in cars and trucks and buildings could reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 targets.

To download copies of the executive summary and the full reports, please see the EPIC Web site at www.sandiego.edu/epic/ghgpolicy.

About Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC)

EPIC is an academic and research center of the University of San Diego School of Law that studies how energy policy issues affect the San Diego County region and California. EPIC integrates research and analysis, law school study and public education, and provides legal and policy expertise and information about efficient and environmentally responsible solutions to our future energy needs.

About The San Diego Foundation

Founded in 1975, The San Diego Foundation is a broad-purpose community foundation helping individuals, families and organizations carry out their charitable plans, with the common goals of improving the quality of life in the greater San Diego region, now and for generations to come.

About the University of San Diego School of Law

The University of San Diego School of Law is a center of academic excellence focused on preparing its students for legal practice in the new century. One of the most selective law schools in the country, the School of Law's nationally recognized faculty create a demanding, yet welcoming environment that emphasizes individualized education. USD law school graduates consistently score higher than the state average on the California Bar Exam and go on to practice law throughout the country and abroad, forming an influential network of alumni. The USD School of Law is one of only 81 law schools in the country to have a chapter of the Order of the Coif, the most distinguished rank of American law schools. The school is accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools. Founded in 1954, the law school is part of the University of San Diego, a private, nonprofit, independent, Roman Catholic university chartered in 1949.

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