

Catalog of State GHG Reduction Policy Options

Brief Descriptions of Cross-Cutting Issues Options

CC-1 GHG Inventories and Forecasts

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventories and forecasts are essential for understanding the magnitude of all emission sources and sinks (both anthropogenic and natural), the relative contribution of various types of emission sources and sinks to total emissions, and the factors that affect trends over time. Inventories and forecasts also help to inform state leaders and the public on statewide trends, opportunities for mitigating emissions or enhancing sinks, and verifying GHG reductions associated with implementation of action plan initiatives. Responsibility for preparing GHG inventories and sinks often resides with the environmental agency, which typically has the expertise needed to systematically compile information on GHG sources and sinks using established methods and data sources. Inventory and forecast efforts should be on-going over time reflecting improvements to the accuracy and completeness of data collected.

CC-2 State Greenhouse Gas Reporting

GHG reporting reflects the measurement and reporting of GHG emissions at a statewide, sector, or sub-sector level to support tracking and management of emissions. GHG reporting can help sources identify emission reduction opportunities and reduce risks associated with possible future GHG mandates by moving “up the learning curve.” Tracking and reporting of GHG emissions can also help in the construction of periodic state GHG inventories. GHG reporting is typically a precursor for sources to participate in GHG reduction programs, opportunities for recognition, and a GHG emission reduction registry, as well as to secure “baseline protection” (i.e., credit for early reductions). Further, collaboration with other states in the development of a GHG reporting program could influence the development of GHG reporting practices throughout the region and nation and build consistency and reciprocity with other state or regional GHG reporting programs.

CC-3 State Greenhouse Gas Registry

A GHG registry enables uniform measurement and recording of GHG emissions reductions in a central repository. Typically, a registry also includes transaction ledger capability in order to support tracking, management, and ownership of emission reductions. Registries can help encourage sources to undertake GHG reduction efforts, enable potential recognition for such actions, provide baseline protection, and support the crediting of GHG mitigation actions. A registry can also provide a mechanism for regional, multi-state, and cross-border cooperation.

CC-4 Options for State Greenhouse Gas Goals or Targets

Some states have established GHG reduction goals or targets; in these cases, the comprehensive, stakeholder-based climate action planning process typically serves to identify and quantify policies and measures by which these goals can be achieved. In states that have not specified goals or targets prior to the planning process, the establishment of goals or targets is often considered in concert with the State after the initial quantification results for other policy options become available.

CC-5 The State's Own GHG Emissions (Lead-by-Example)

In terms of GHG emissions, states are not only political jurisdictions that can provide incentives to, or impose regulatory requirements on, sources and citizens in order to reduce pollution. They are also significant emitters, by virtue of state-owned buildings, fleets, and various emitting activities. States can reinforce the importance of reducing GHG, promote others to act in this direction, and often demonstrate the economic upside of doing so by putting their actions where their concerns are. For example, states can purchase low-emission vehicles for their fleets, utilize biofuels in their vehicles, construct and/or retrofit their buildings to be more energy efficient, and purchase green or renewable electricity. States can also commit to initiatives or actions focused on GHG reductions, such as the Chicago Climate Exchange.

CC-6 Comprehensive Local Government Climate Action Plans

The relationship between local government jurisdictions and the state echoes in many ways the federal relationship between states and the U.S. Government. It may therefore be appropriate to enable, assist, and otherwise encourage local governments to pursue comprehensive, multi-sector climate action plans within their jurisdictions. Analogous to the state effort, local climate planning initiatives could involve local stakeholders, identify and address local mitigation opportunities, establish local emission inventories and/or forecasts, set local GHG reduction goals or targets, consider local climate impacts and possible adaptation responses, develop long-term sustainability plans, etc. The state should encourage local governments in such efforts and contribute technical and other assistance to the extent possible.

CC-7 State Climate Public Education and Outreach

Public education and outreach can comprise and/or support GHG emissions reduction programs, policies, or goals. Public education and outreach is vital to fostering a broad awareness of climate change issues and effects among a state's citizens (e.g., co-benefits such as clean air and public health). Ultimately, public education and outreach is the foundation for the long-term success of all policy initiatives.