

Don't Rebrand Fort Collins Climate Action Plan

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City Council will hold a work session today, during which they will discuss “re-branding” the Fort Collins Climate Action Plan (CAP). Opaque and confusing names like “Road to 2020” and “Fortify Fort Collins” have been proposed. The CAP name is transparent and clear, its substance based on an immense body of well-established science from the leading scientific institutions worldwide. Implementing the CAP will significantly reduce our city’s carbon footprint, be a model for other cities, provide co-benefits to our local economy and public health, and help us adapt to unavoidable climate impacts already happening. Those impacts include more frequent and longer heat waves, increased air pollution and associated health problems, more extreme and costly weather events, floods and wildfires, and increased prevalence of diseases like West Nile.

Effectively communicating the enormous public health impacts and risks of climate change requires clarity and building trust. The basic rule for building trust is, “Say what you will do, and do what you say.” “Re-branding” the CAP violates these rules.

The drive to “re-brand” the CAP does not arise from any current lack of clarity, as has been claimed by some. Perhaps the driver is that the science of global warming has been so politicized and confused by propaganda that some hope to find common ground by avoiding the term altogether. But such appeasement will not change minds nor win battles in what author Chris Mooney has called “The Republican War on Science.” Our 45th president has shockingly joined this war, declaring climate change a hoax, and filling his administration with climate change deniers.

Yet facts are stubborn things. The laws of physics and chemistry are indifferent to human belief. Global warming cannot be slowed without grappling with and communicating facts, not fiction. And one of the most stubborn of facts is that we, the human species, are running out of time to act to stem climate change. Please contact our Fort Collins City Council before Tuesday evening at CityCouncil@fcgov.com, and tell them the CAP name must communicate both “climate” and “action.”

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