

FCSG Statement on Progress Toward Meeting Fort Collins' CAP Goals

Updated on July 26, 2019

Fort Collins City councilmembers discussed progress made toward meeting the community's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals during their work session on Tuesday, July 23rd. While the final numbers for 2018 won't be available for another month, here is what we do know:

1. Trends in the electric and natural gas sectors – which together accounted for over 70% of reported community GHG emissions in 2017 – suggest that it will likely be difficult for Fort Collins to meet its 2020 emission reduction goal.
2. If the City were to count GHG emissions from one large industrial emitter (Broadcom), our community's progress toward reducing its emissions would be much less impressive than the official 2018 report will suggest.

Information provided in the Council's "Work Session Item" (available [here](#)) shows that in 2018, emissions from the electric sector were about the same as they were in 2017, and that emissions from the natural gas sector increased about 6% since then. Given that Fort Collins was three percentage points shy of its 2020 goal in 2017, and given the size of the electric and natural gas sectors, the 2017 – 2018 trend lines suggest that it will not be easy to meet our 2020 goal.

Still more significantly, the City does not count industrial GHG emissions, which in the case of Broadcom (formerly Avago Technologies) are quite large. According to the EPA, Broadcom's uncounted GHG emissions (mostly Sulfur hexafluoride, which has an extremely high global warming potential) were equivalent to approximately 226,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide in 2017.¹ If these emissions WERE counted, community emissions in 2017 would have been 11% higher than the official number. Looked at another way, if the City were to count Broadcom's emissions, the community-wide emissions decrease in 2017 would have been only about 7% since 2005 – not the officially reported 17%.

In order to address the two problems pointed out above, the Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) makes the following three recommendations:

1. Develop and fund mid-cycle budget offers to help close any anticipated gap between the City's official 2020 GHG emissions and its 2020 goal of 20% emissions reductions compared to 2005 levels. The FCSG has previously suggested providing more funding for energy efficiency and non-residential solar rebates (offers 9.90 and 9.92 in the 2019-2020 biennial budget).
2. Study mitigation options and then work with Broadcom to encourage and perhaps incentivize that corporation to reduce its Sulfur hexafluoride and other industrial emissions. One possibility among others would be to provide Broadcom with a low-interest loan in order to help it modify its processes or install emission control technologies.
3. Include Broadcom's emissions in future City GHG Inventory reports. While there is some justification for not tracking all industrial emissions within City boundaries, Broadcom's classification by the EPA as a "large emitter" – with required annual reporting - makes it a special case. Including Broadcom's emissions in the City's official inventory would represent an important step toward reducing the serious threat those emissions pose to Earth's climate.

¹ <https://ghgdata.epa.gov/ghgp/service/facilityDetail/2017?id=1008734&ds=E&et=&popup=true>