

## **FCSG Statement on Community-Wide Climate Action Plan Update**

At its meeting on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Fort Collins City Council approved a resolution to develop an updated Climate Action Plan that will describe steps that the Fort Collins community could take to achieve a community-wide greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 80% with respect to 2005 levels by 2030. The updated plan will be put together by an advisory committee consisting of members selected from City boards and commissions, the environmental community, the social services community, the business community, major institutions, subject matter experts, and City staff.

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) strongly supports this effort, which will bring the current long term goal – an 80% reduction by 2050 - into better alignment with the best available science, and will outline a path toward achieving the new goal. Working toward and achieving the new goal would result in both economic and environmental benefits, and would establish Fort Collins as a true climate policy leader.

The FCSG has reviewed the report by the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) titled “Stepping Up: Benefits and Cost of Accelerating Fort Collins' Energy and Climate Goals.” That report advocates reducing our GHG emissions by 80% compared to 2005 levels by 2030, and outlines how to get there from here. This would accelerate the City’s existing goal – 80% GHG emissions reductions by 2050 – by two decades. We have supported this accelerated goal since 2009, when we held a series of retreats to develop breakthrough strategies on how we might achieve 80% greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2030. For details, visit <http://fcsg.fccan.org/ClimateSolutions>.

The RMI report focuses on the economic benefits associated with accelerating the City’s GHG emissions reduction goal, which include job creation, the stimulation of innovation, and reducing cash outflows for fossil fuel. These are potentially very significant benefits. We emphasize the critical environmental benefit that would result from successful efforts by Fort Collins and other cities to reduce GHG emissions both rapidly and deeply.

Climate models show that if humanity fails to reduce its GHG emissions by at least 80% with respect to 2005 levels by the middle of this century, we will very likely cause what is officially termed “dangerous interference with the climate system” – a global temperature rise of more than two degrees Celsius. FCSG Science Advisor Scott Denning has developed a simple on-line calculator that can quickly show the impact on Earth’s climate of varying levels of GHG emissions reductions by relatively rich and relatively poor countries, calibrated to the results of more comprehensive models. The calculator is available at <http://biocycle.atmos.colostate.edu/shiny/emissions/>. Users will see that it is very difficult to avoid crossing the two degree Celsius threshold if deep emissions cuts are not fully in place by 2050 – at the latest.

Due to the on-going transfer of technology and the migration of production from relatively rich countries to relatively poor countries, GHG emissions reductions by the former will likely lead those by the latter. So if the United States and other rich countries were to achieve 80% GHG emissions reductions by 2050, China, India, and other relatively poor countries would likely not be able to achieve such emissions reductions until 2060, or even later. This would almost certainly result in catastrophic climate change.

Our hope is that Fort Collins will provide a good example to the rest of the United States, to other wealthy countries, and to the world as a whole of how to reduce GHG emissions rapidly and deeply while maintaining a vibrant economy. As the RMI report points out, we have a number of factors working in our favor. Those include a well-educated population, a strong ethic of environmental protection, and a municipally owned utility. We are well positioned to lead on this issue – and an 80% GHG emissions reduction by 2030 is a goal we should all wholeheartedly embrace.