

April 1, 2005

Dear Governor Baldacci:

As you know, Maine is part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a coalition of states in the Northeast that are working together to create a program to dramatically reduce global warming pollution from power plants in the region. Global warming is a serious problem that requires quick, aggressive action. As a result of increasing dependence on burning fossil fuels for energy, global warming is changing weather patterns and temperatures all over the world, with harmful effects on our health, our environment, and our economy. The impacts are already occurring – the world's average temperature has increased .6 degrees Celsius over the last century, and scientists predict further increases of 1.4 to 5.8 degrees Celsius between 1990 and 2100. As a result, our region and the rest of the world has already begun to experience more extreme weather events like storms and flooding, receding coastlines as a result of rising sea levels, and more unhealthy smog days in the summer months.

In order to turn the tide on global warming, the United States has to take strong action to reduce our own emissions. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is an opportunity for the Northeast to provide leadership to the rest of the nation, by creating a precedent setting cap-and-trade program as a model for other states and regions throughout the country. The seriousness of the problem, and the leadership opportunity in front of us, require that the program that we create is effective at reducing global warming pollution from power plants quickly and dramatically. Therefore, we have enclosed the following principles that should act as a guide for you and your Administration as you continue to develop the model rule.

These criteria support a program that reduces global warming pollution by at least 25% below current levels by 2020, without loopholes or harmful subsidies, and at minimal cost to consumers. Following these principles will ensure that Maine and neighboring states provide the leadership that our country and the rest of the world needs. We urge you to stand up for a precedent-setting program that abides by these principles, and provide historic leadership in the worldwide fight to stop global warming.

Sincerely,

Sue Jones
Natural Resources Council of Maine