



## Printable version: Wednesday, October 4, 2006

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### 14. **CLIMATE:** 30 states discuss proposed emissions registry

Arthur O'Donnell, special to *Greenwire*

Representatives of 30 states are discussing the creation of a multi-state climate action registry to track greenhouse gas emissions and efforts to curb them.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE SPECIAL REPORT

Led by existing registries in California and the Northeast, the initiative is aimed at developing common accounting practices and establishing a single Internet-based source for monitoring both voluntary and mandated GHG reporting.

Joining the California Climate Action Registry and the Eastern Climate Registry are the Western Regional Air Partnership and the Lake Michigan Air Directors Consortium. The environmental think tank, World Resources Institute, is working with the group.

The group believes a large multi-state system would increase participation in registries, help standardize best practices, leverage scarce resources and facilitate innovation at the state level.

Most important, the promoters say, is the creation of a "common currency" to ensure that emissions, baselines and reductions are measured consistently. In other words: to make sure that a ton of carbon dioxide in California is equal to a ton of CO<sub>2</sub> elsewhere.

Linda Adams, secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency, said the effort "will be critical for paving the way for regional cap-and-trade markets and a national market for greenhouse gas reductions."

As part of California's landmark "Global Warming Solutions Act" that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) signed into law last week, major carbon-emitting industries and utilities will be required to report their emissions to the California registry.

The registry could provide a platform for emissions accounting under a potential cap-and-trade system for marketing GHG offsets expected to be developed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the agency responsible for implementation of the new law.

The registry now has over 90 voluntary members representing utilities, corporations and government entities accounting for more than 200 million metric tons of GHG emissions.

The Eastern registry -- a project of the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management -- includes 10 states with a mix of voluntary and mandatory reporting programs.

Other states are taking a voluntary approach but see a common platform as a way to maximize their efforts without "reinventing the wheel," said Joel Levin, the California registry's vice president of business development.

"The idea is to create a policy neutral accounting framework," Levin said in an interview. "Not every state is going to do what California has done, and most states don't have a huge agency like CARB. But all are interested in having a single accounting structure."

Though the group currently is not focused on building a trading platform, Levin said, the effort "could create the infrastructure for trading among other states."

Michael Koerner, executive director of Lake Michigan consortium, said his group of air regulators in seven Midwestern states has been formulating a plan for a regional registry over the past year but decided it would be better to be part of a broader program.

"We are not currently pursuing a stand-alone program, and we're only talking about a voluntary registry, but we want to make sure it is as easy and seamless as possible," Koerner said.

The multi-state group has not yet reached any formal agreement except to explore the issues, sources said. Representatives of the states are holding regular discussions of technical matters and hope to devise a plan for adoption early next year.