

June 25, 2007

Dear Governor,

Since the signing of the historic climate agreement of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers in 2001, even more scientific evidence has demonstrated that global warming is real, that it is affecting us now, and that human activities—particularly the burning of fossil fuels—are the primary cause.

Science is also clear about what we need to do to address the problem: immediately and significantly reduce emissions of the pollutants that cause global warming. Avoiding the worst consequences of global warming will require New England, the entire United States and industrialized countries to stabilize emissions within the next decade and reduce them by about 80 percent by mid-century. Consider the following:

- Global average temperatures increased by 1° F in the 20th century and are now increasing at a rate of about 0.36° F per decade. Sea levels are on the rise, ice and snow cover are decreasing, and hurricane intensity has increased.
- The consensus view of the scientific community is that most of the global warming that has occurred is due to human activities—particularly the burning of fossil fuels. Fossil fuel consumption releases carbon dioxide, which traps the sun's radiation near the earth's surface. Since 1750, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by 35 percent—a rate of increase unprecedented in the last 20,000 years.
- Should the world continue on its present course, global warming emissions could triple in the next half century, with global temperatures increasing by 8° F by 2100. Sea levels would rise by one and a half feet (and possibly more), threatening low-lying coastal areas. And the ecological balance upon which life depends would be irrevocably altered.

Achieving the needed reductions may not be easy, but it can be done. By improving the efficiency with which we use fossil fuels and increasing our use of clean, renewable energy, our state can reduce its global warming emissions in the near future, while putting us on a path toward dramatically lower global warming emissions in the decades to come.

There are challenging but feasible strategies for electricity, building performance and transportation that, if implemented, could achieve the reductions scientists say are needed and are outlined in the 2001 climate agreement. **The New England states were at the forefront of action on global warming in 2001, but have since been eclipsed by other states and nations. Our states must redouble efforts to avoid global warming's worst effects and regain that leadership position.**

The New England Climate Coalition the undersigned organizations urge the following actions, below and in the attached platform to fulfill the 2001 agreement and cut global warming emissions. The significant cost of inaction dwarfs a reasonable and immediate investment in these policies, particularly when one considers the co-benefits of reduced air pollution, jobs creation, energy independence, and clean tech economic innovation.

**Reduce electricity consumption by 10 percent from current levels by 2020.** Dramatic improvements in energy efficiency are possible in virtually every aspect of our lives. Studies reviewed by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy in 2004 show that we could reduce our electricity consumption by as much as 20 percent at no net cost to the economy. States should prioritize investments in energy

efficiency from public benefit funds, the advanced capacity market and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

**Obtain 20 percent of our electricity from new renewable energy sources by 2020.** New England has almost limitless potential for the generation of power from natural forces. By ramping up our use of wind, solar, geothermal, ocean and clean, sustainable biomass energy and other renewable forms of energy—and using that energy to replace power production at dirty, fossil fuel-fired power plants and prevent new plants from being built—we could dramatically reduce global warming emissions from electric power production. For a host of emergency and waste management issues, it is also important to exclude increased investment in or explicit market benefit to nuclear reactors.

**Make our existing homes and commercial buildings more efficient.** For existing structures, the state can encourage weatherization of buildings and deployment of more efficient heating and cooling appliances and equipment. Setting energy efficiency standards for products will further reduce homes and businesses energy usage.

**Ensure that all new construction is energy efficient.** Taking advantage of current energy efficient technologies, all new buildings can and should be 50 percent more efficient by 2020, a goal endorsed by the American Institute of Architects. Towards mid-century, we will be able to apply new technologies to transform the way we consume energy and achieve even larger improvements in efficiency to build all new homes as zero-energy homes.

**Stabilize and reduce vehicle travel.** New Englanders drive nearly twice as many miles per year as they did a quarter-century ago, leading to increased emissions of global warming pollutants. Residents are cutting back on driving as a result of higher gasoline prices, but many people have few realistic alternatives to driving. Through changes in public policy and development patterns, we can be given more transportation and smart growth choices and incentives not to drive, thus reducing the growth in vehicle travel.

**Promote efficient, clean cars and low-carbon fuel.** To ensure our vehicles are the cleanest and most efficient, we must implement all aspects of the Clean Cars program and advocate for improvements in federal fuel economy standards. All types of vehicles—from SUVs to compacts—can be designed to be far more energy efficient. Establishing low-carbon fuel standard will promote home-grown biofuels. Ethanol and biodiesel that are produced cleanly and sustainably could significantly reduce global warming emissions from transportation—especially if these biofuels are produced from plant wastes and cellulose. Other vehicle technologies—like “plug-in” hybrids, electric vehicles and fuel cell vehicles—have the potential to dramatically reduce global warming emissions in the future.

**Establish mandatory systems of reporting global warming emissions from all sectors.** It is crucial to establish baseline emissions and track global warming emissions trends from year to year in every sector of the economy. Our state must cut emissions in every area in order to meet the overall reduction targets.

**Support mandatory caps on global warming pollution at the state and federal levels.** The United States must remain vigilant about stabilizing, and eventually reducing, global warming pollution from all sectors of the economy. Mandatory limits on global warming emissions would help to achieve that goal.

Taking these steps will reverse the trajectory of global warming emissions, putting our state and region on a path to achieving the even greater reductions in global warming pollution that will be required in the decades to come.

Sincerely,