

Press Information

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THE
WILD
CENTER

Gathering Aims to Shape Climate Solutions Action for the U.S.

Participants Drafting Memorandum to Nation for an American Response to Climate Change

Tupper Lake, NY - More than 200 low-carbon economy leaders in the United States gathered in upstate New York's Adirondack Park for an intensive two days of work on June 25 and 26. Their goal was to develop consensus on an economically valid action plan that would place the U.S. in a leadership position in moving toward a lower carbon and lower pollution economy. Many of the participants are now working on a draft memorandum of conference findings, tentatively titled A Message to the Nation. The memorandum is expected to be delivered in Washington DC before the November presidential election. Conference organizers say they expect more than 100 leaders to sign the document detailing specific action plans to cut carbon emissions.

"The threats that are going to come from dramatic shifts in natural systems are likely to affect everyone on Earth sooner than we first thought," said Kate Fish, Conference Director. "But everyone on Earth doesn't have the entrepreneurial and inventive economy that we have in the U.S. We have the technologies and the means to move away from carbon-based energy sources and to dramatically improve our efficiency. This gathering was definitely not about the problem; it was about how we can thoughtfully and quickly cut greenhouse gas emissions."

The Conference focused on power generation, the buildings and appliances sector, on capital markets and the role of carbon finance, and on the potential for forest and land use policies to create more places that can take carbon out of the air. Participants in each of the groups are now detailing specific policy recommendations and real costs of action in each area for inclusion in the Message to the Nation. Participants included leaders from General Electric, AES, British Petroleum, National Grid, Honeywell, Dow Building Solutions, McKinsey, Bovis Lend Lease, Johnson Controls, United Technologies, Credit Suisse and Goldman Sachs.

Presenters included John Holdren, Director of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Director, Science, Technology and Public Policy Program Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School at Harvard. Tom Lovejoy, the President of the H John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics and the Environment. Dimitri Zenghelis, the Chief Economist at Cisco's Climate Change Long-Term Innovation Group and a Senior Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics. Ken Ostrowski, a Director at McKinsey & Company. Michael Levi, project director for the Council on Foreign Relations' Independent Task Force on Climate Change, and Jeremy Oppenheim, a Director at McKinsey & Company.

In attendance were leaders in climate policy and science from Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Cornell who joined peers from foundations like the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, as well as leaders from The Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Defense Council,

Environmental Defense Fund, World Resources Institute, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and other concerned non-profits.

"The thing that made this Conference completely different was the range of people who attended, and the seriousness of the numbers we had to work with," said Dan Esty, who is Director of the Yale Center for Environmental Policy and author of *Green to Gold*, a book that looks at the bottom line benefits of sustainable business practices. "It's hard to talk about serious policy options unless you can look at dollars and cents. We're talking about a transformation of the way we power our lives, and to say that's complicated doesn't begin to get at it. This Conference supplied us with an incredibly deep fact base that we could use to put real prices and paybacks on different actions."

The Conference's Knowledge Partner was McKinsey & Company, one of the world's leading global consulting firms. McKinsey initiated a Climate Change Special Initiative in 2007, and assigned a team of experts to deliver a comprehensive cost analysis of more than 250 options for cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from hybridization of cars and trucks to efficient hot water heaters. Their report, *Reducing U.S. Green House Gas Emissions: How Much at What Cost?* formed the basis of the Conference's working documents.

"We never expected to reach a complete consensus on every option," said Conference Co-chair Carter Bales, one of the authors of the McKinsey report. "We did expect to find many areas where we could find enough agreement on ways to take big bites out of our carbon emissions and get us on a path that will let the U.S. play a more important role in inventing future energy production and more efficient energy use."

Conference participants praised the gathering and the process. "The conference was fantastic," said Rich Kroes, Product Strategy Director at Oracle. "A stimulating two days with tremendous thought leadership in attendance." "I found it inspiring and very troubling simultaneously," said Colin leDuc, the Head of Research at Generation Investment Management a company chaired by former Vice President Al Gore. "Inspiring due to the plethora of solutions being worked on, troubling because of the magnitude of the challenge at hand."

The Conference was conceived and hosted by The Wild Center, a new museum built in the Adirondack Park to help people better understand how natural systems work and how those thriving systems can exist alongside human populations.

The Conference was sponsored with lead support from AES Corporation, the Betsy & Jesse Fink Foundation who provided seed funding, Brookfield Renewable Power, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, General Electric, The Henry P. Kendall Foundation, McKinsey & Company, Inc., Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and The Summit Foundation. Additional sponsors included Bovis Lend Lease, Dow Building Solutions, Honeywell, Johnson Controls, National Grid, The Lyme Timber Company, The Nature Conservancy and United Technologies. Additional support was provided by Environmental Defense, Hellmuth Obata + Kassabaum, Juice Energy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Oracle, Syracuse Center of Excellence and the Union of Concerned Scientists and The Wild Center.

For more information, including videos of presentations and copies of the initial pre-conference reports, see www.usclimateaction.org.