

**State Climate and Energy Program—State Technical Forum**  
**State Programs for Building Local Government Climate & Energy Planning**  
**Capacity**

Thursday, May 28, 2009

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## Introduction

Julia Miller: This is Julia Miller from the EPA's State Climate and Energy Program, and I want to welcome everyone to the May Tech Forum call. I also want to thank our speakers. They put a lot of time into preparing for the call, and we always appreciate their efforts there. You can see on the screen right now the agenda for the call. If you look towards the bottom, it says additional materials for this call can be found at that Web site. There's a background document that we prepared that gives a little expert information on today's topic, and also has all the past Tech Forum calls with the background and presentations and everything else. So make sure that you check that out if you haven't already.

I'd like to announce next month's call. In June, we're going to be talking about what's happening on the Hill with regards to climate legislation and what the implications are for states. So, we haven't picked a date yet; we're getting close to picking a date, but we will send out information when we have the date announced. Next month's call is actually the last call for the season. We always take a break for the summer, and then we'll start up again in October. If you have any suggestions for topics, you can feel free to e-mail me or Catherine Morris. My e-mail is [miller.julia@epa.gov](mailto:miller.julia@epa.gov). For those of you who just joined us, everyone is on mute. If you have a question over the course of the call, you need to hit #6. So with that I guess we can get started. Catherine, if you want to lend the controls over to me.

Catherine Morris: Ok, while I'm doing that, let me just remind all of our participants of a few rules. As Julia mentioned, if you do need to unmute your line you can use #6. Everybody keep your line muted during the presentation. You have two opportunities to engage our speakers. One will be at the conclusion of the presentation we'll allow some questioning. You can submit your questions also online with the webinar. You'll see a control panel, which you can expand or minimize with the double arrow at the top left hand corner. There is an option for specific questions. Those questions will go to us, and we'll try and give those to the speakers for you, on your behalf, if you can't get in to ask them directly. Julia would you like some help?

Julia Miller: Yeah, if you could pull them up that would be great. I think there are some issues on our end. Can you do that? Is that possible?

Catherine Morris: I'll take over the controls again.

## **State Programs for Building Local Government Climate and Energy Planning Capacity**

### Slide 1: State Programs for Building Local Government Climate and Energy Planning Capacity

Julia Miller: While this is being pulled up, I'm just going to give a little background on what we're going to be talking a little bit about today. In conversations we have had with several states that we work with, more and more states are talking about the importance of local governments in helping states uphold their climate and energy goals. It's challenging though because, as you know, every state does things differently. There's a huge difference in how states approach climate and energy policy programs. And there's an even bigger difference at the local level. So this has been something that states have really been grappling with, especially now in light of ARRA funding. In the past, a lot of states have provided funding to local governments and grants. But now more states are looking at providing technical support to local governments and building capacity with regard to climate and energy policy. So it really seems like this is something that more states are starting to wrestle with, and we're lucky today to have two states—Wisconsin and Massachusetts—with us on the call. They're going to talk about the programs that they've started in their states.

Really quickly, we've got Andrea Denny here, and she's going to talk about local governments, and what they do to fit in to help states achieve their climate and energy goals.

Andrea Denny: Thank you. I just have a few slides to go through. So, if we can go to the first slide.

### Slide 2: Local Governments Matter

Andrea Denny: Basically, this is my little pitch to convince you about why local governments are important when it comes to climate change legislation. And basically, every day local governments make decisions that impact energy and climate change. And a lot of the actions they can take complement, supplement, and sometimes even enforce some of the policies states have in place. For example, state's building code: often that enforcement is done at the local government level. And the actions that they're taking can also help your state climate objectives. And I just listed here some of the key areas of control that local governments tend to have. Some of them do vary from local government to local government depending on exactly how they're structured, but in essence of course their own operations, which can include utilities—both power utilities and water utilities. They can do a lot with transportation planning and transit. They can do a lot with residential and commercial building use, waste management, and water and wastewater treatment. They're also really at the forefront to feel the impacts of climate change and adaptation and helping with state adaptation.

### Slide 3: Local Government Motivation and Needs

Andrea Denny: There are a lot of different reasons that local governments are pursuing climate actions. Of course, some of them are looking at climate because they believe it's the right thing to do and that they have a responsibility to address climate change. But, they're also looking at the activities related to climate change for other reasons as well. For example, energy

expenditures can be up to 10 percent of a local government's budget. They've seen the job creation potential. A lot of areas have air quality problems that they're facing, and there are links between the climate benefits and the air quality benefits of the different actions. But, also concerns about sustainability as a whole that a local government might have. And energy security and reliability.

And what local governments really need in terms of support from state government, and of course it will vary. There are some very specific things that local governments need to do with little support, especially small and rural governments. But it's broad range of support that's needed. But the kind of key areas that we've read that local governments want support with is funding, of course, and not just funding, but flexibility and funding that is prescriptive but allows them to fulfill their unique needs. Direct technical assistance could be helping them identify options, helping them quantify results, tools, training, basically any kind of technical assistance that they offer they would probably be appreciative of. And finally another thing is access to state mechanisms. The clearest example of this I can give is that smaller governments may not have the bulk purchasing power that a state entity might have. State procurements may get better deals on energy efficiency equipment or light bulbs or whatever, and if local governments can have the same purchasing agreements, they're able then to implement things more cost-effectively in their community. But that's just one example of a state mechanism that local governments might be able to tap into—another would be, for example, policy use, ordinances, things like that.

And finally, I know a lot of states already have programs and funding for local governments. But it's not enough to have those programs—you need to make sure that local governments know about these programs. There's really an overwhelming amount of information out there. It's not always what local governments are eligible to apply for. Help for funding is available and so the more you can make it easy to get that information, that's really key.

#### Slide 4: Key EPA Resources

Andrea Denny: I just want to highlight a couple of the resources that we at EPA have been developing for local governments that we thought might be helpful to you as you're thinking about what local governments might need help with. So these might be helpful, and you might be able to surprise your local governments with something else and make them aware that there's help out there. We have a new best practice strategies guide that's in development, and we have about six chapters roughly already and we'll have another two in June. We do a monthly webcast for local governments, kind of like the Tech Forum but with an emphasis on local governments. We have a resource database. And we also have a brand new grant program that we're hoping to open next month. Applications will be available to local governments. So, certainly, I would encourage you to promote that to local governments in your state. The Web site describing that grant program...can be reached from the main site. And then finally, we've done a lot of work in walking through the resources that are in the recovery reinvestment act as they apply to local governments and what resources are out there to help them find that money and spend that money wisely. And that's an area, as Julia mentioned, where local governments could really use assistance. We hope that you find the work we've done helpful for when you're helping your

local government. So those are just some things to think about, and you're going to hear some much more concrete examples of what it is you can do.

Slide 5: For More Information

Catherine Morris: The last slide here has the contact information for both Andrea and Julia, if you want to follow up with them. Let me just see if there are any questions that you might have for them, before we move onto our other speakers, about the resources and Andrea's comments.

Julia Miller: And to unmute your line make sure you push #6.

## **The Wisconsin Energy Independent Communities Partnership: A Voluntary Partnership to Achieve 25x25**

Catherine Morris: Ok, let me introduce Brian Driscoll. Brian is the director at the Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence, a fairly new office in the state government. We asked him to talk a little bit about the actual assistance that they're providing to local governments. So Brian, you should have a little popup that gives you control of your presentation.

Slide 1: The Wisconsin Energy Independent Communities Partnership: A Voluntary Partnership to Achieve 25x25

Brian Driscoll: Thank you. Good afternoon.

Catherine Morris: I should also mention that in addition to his current role, Brian was Governor Doyle's policy advisor on environment and agriculture issues and has also been on the governor's global warming task force. So he has a very broad picture that will probably help in discussion.

Brian Driscoll: Thank you. I appreciate that introduction. I guess I'm here today to go through a young program that is already really successful, especially with the recent developments with the recovery act that created a state-wide network, energy issues, and communities to have discussions. It's just been very, very productive.

Slide 2: Energy Independent (EI) Communities

Brian Driscoll: So, the Wisconsin Independent Energy Communities Partnership was started basically because of other movements that were going on. Our state had over 20 communities that signed on with the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and also had over 20 eco-municipalities, or communities that have studied The Natural Step. And so we used those communities as a basis or target communities to grow from, and then we started to discover communities that were taking on issues that weren't even aware of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, eco-municipalities, or The Natural Step movement. Once we started it in the spring of probably March or so of last year, Governor Doyle came out and said this is really important that we develop a relationship between state government and local government. We're all in this together; we're trying to do the same thing. And we now have since that time—a year a half later—almost 90 communities in this voluntary program. The only thing that is a requirement is to pass the local resolution. One of the statements that I often hear from mayors or county executives is that anybody can pass a resolution, and then it's put up on the shelf and nothing's done about it. We're very much aware of that. So, what we try to do is begin to share the lead by example and best practices by creating some case studies.

Slide 2: Energy Independent (EI) Communities (cont.)

Brian Driscoll: So, I'm really hoping that we'll be able to see some real growth at the end of this year because we provided 10 groups, or 10 communities that essentially are made up of 23 communities, with something called a 25x25 plan grant because the resolution that communities

have passed and the goal that Governor Doyle has set aside for the state to go for is 25 percent renewables by 2025. And that's all electrical use and all transportation fuel use coming from renewable sources. The communities here come from all over the state have voluntarily chosen to become part of this initiative. We wanted to reward some of our leading communities, so we gave out just under half a million dollars. The average award was about \$50,000 and we had one award for about \$12,000, and the highest award was \$65,000 for a year's worth of planning.

Basically, what communities are doing is they're collecting their baseline data or their energy consumption data in all their buildings and facilities, and their infrastructure—speed lights and traffic signal lights—and included in there is all their transportation fuels from their fleet vehicles, and their trucks and things like that. Once they have all that information, they bring it to us, and we work with a consultant, and they're able to provide a really comprehensive analysis on how much your community is using. I was with a community yesterday and they found it just fascinating that they now know that 73-74 percent of the energy that they use comes from the buildings that their local government is responsible for, and then it's broken out after that. Communities are learning an evolved database and it's all based on facts and numbers. From there, the communities are having monthly meetings where they identify priorities that are unique to their community. Once they identify those priorities, they're put into a system that is included with that baseline data. Then a package of information to create the 25x25 plan is then made.

So, by December 2009 each of our communities will have a plan that will give them a pathway toward 25 percent renewables by 2025. We have decided to use \$2.5 million from our recovery act funds from the block grant to do another round of 25x25 grants. This we're hoping could....

[End of recording.]