



THE CENTER FOR
CLIMATE STRATEGIES

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NEW STUDY IDENTIFIES EXISTING LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES — NOT CHEAP NATURAL GAS OR ECONOMIC DOWNTURN — AS LARGEST DRIVER BEHIND DECLINING CARBON EMISSIONS

AS CARBON TAX & CLIMATE DISCUSSION INCREASES, SUCCESSFUL EMISSIONS REDUCTION POLICIES ANALYZED

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Nov. 15, 2012) — A new study released today by the Center for Climate Strategies (CCS) upends the conventional wisdom that cheap natural gas and the lagging economy alone account for recent and expected declines in U.S. carbon emissions.

The study and accompanying analysis show that counted together, eight policies already in place at local, state and federal levels account for more reductions — 46 percent — than the recession or natural gas, as projected by 2020. Additional smaller scale policies and price changes add up to 27 percent more impact.

Working from Energy Information Administration data, the study cited current projections for carbon pollution and its equivalent as 23 percent lower by 2020 than the estimates made in 2005 for the same period, and 69 percent closer to President Obama's stated climate goals.

Although the economic downturn was the single largest reduction driver, energy and transportation policies collectively account for a bigger share. Those policies include state renewable portfolio standards, energy efficiency requirements, car mileage rules, and other actions that affect national energy production and use.

"Our study shows that actions from the city to federal level are working; these programs are already lowering greenhouse gas emissions and helping better protect our country from climate change-related impacts," said Tom Peterson, CCS President and CEO and report co-author. "These are not far-off solutions still being tested in a lab or on a computer. These are practical approaches that not only help fight climate change but also create new markets and investments, protect our national energy security, and make communities safer and more sustainable."

Sustainable energy and transportation policies now in place at the local, state, and federal levels will account for a growing share of projected emissions reductions over time, rising from 46 percent in 2020 to 58 percent in 2030 of the projected decline. Additional smaller scale policy actions will increase this impact further.

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The study further assessed 20 new policy steps that could be instituted by localities, states, and the nation to close the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions gap and increase economic and energy security across the board. Scaling up programs such as demand-side management for heat and power, increasing public transit and transportation efficiency, and improving forest conservation and restoration could contribute even more to meeting the critical goal of a 2020 goal of seventeen percent carbon pollution reductions below 2005 levels. These also set the stage for longer-term actions needed to stabilize the climate and win the global race for sustainable energy markets.

“These results show that meaningful progress is being made through actions that are powerful, productive and practical. It also shows that there is more where this came from, and that we can take important new steps with confidence,” said Peterson.