

ACCO Climate Leadership Summit

November 8-9, 2010 | Hyattsville, Maryland

Marriott Inn & Conference Center, University of Maryland University College
(The nation's first LEED certified conference center)

ROUNDTABLE NOTES

Track 1: Redefining & Inspiring Climate Leadership

Session 1: Shaping Climate Policy

Moderators: Fred Light, Jeanette Pablo, William Thomas, Joe Mendelson

Takeaways:

A major problem with climate change policy is we are sitting around waiting for something to happen. There is a general consensus that there will not be any comprehensive climate legislation in the next ten years. The reality of the election is the increased focus on the EPA. We can change policy in two ways:

- a) watch the EPA work (EPA regulation means a lack of leadership and a focus on compliance only), and
- b) develop alternatives.

There is a gap in how Americans view climate change. They either think it is a major threat, or that it is a hoax. Many believe the issue is somewhere in between because of media influence. The truth is, sometimes the medium is not what is right, sometimes an extreme is right. This is the case with climate change. Policymakers need to highlight that this is a national priority. Until this happens, people will not connect the dots. Proposed solutions:

- Show correlation between energy efficiency and the bottom line.
- Government must help pay for compliance costs of new regulation.
- Until the economy recovers, baby steps must be taken.
- There must be more research and development.
- Messengers must be changed ... it shouldn't be just the environmentalists speaking. Obama may not be the messenger. Preachers, businessmen, and right-of-center republicans that see the value of climate change may be.

Next steps:

ACCO can fill the vacuum left by the EPA's Climate Leadership phase-out. To start, ACCO should look at the actions of the EPA over the last 40 years, their successes and failures. What lessons can ACCO take from the EPA? What are the EPA's constraints and freedoms? What are ACCO's?

- Communication approach to community and policymakers needs to be overhauled.
- Shift focus to local projects
- With Federal government unable to move forward, corporations and local governments are possible solutions
- Identify opportunities for non-partisan approaches

Recommendations on discussion or working groups focus:

- Series of webinars and a roundtable oriented workshop on shaping climate policy
- White paper
- Develop models / templates for locally oriented projects that can be reproduced
- Others ?