

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 5: Government

Session 3: The Role of Sub-National Government in Leading Climate Response

Moderators: Doug Scott, Aaron Lande, Obadiah Bartholomy

Takeaways:

There is a lack of collaboration across regions or states. This needs to be encouraged, with a particular focus on transportation and land use strategies.

How do you get innovation if doing something new is imprudent due to uncertainty? Do you need government insurance for new utilities or new utility projects? Currently it is better to be second or third in line to develop a new plant than first (no incentive for first movers).

- One solution could potentially be the Clean Energy Development Agency (CEDA) loan guarantee so that utilities can make investments.
- Another solution could be an investment tax credit. This has been successful in getting small projects but not necessarily new/innovative projects. It is important for the Federal Government to not only create the incentives but stick with the project for long enough to see it to completion.

We need to iron out the roles of various levels of government. What is the appropriate role of state and local governments? How difficult is it giving up power to a larger entity (i.e., State or Federal Government)? Should we let the local governments be innovative and the Federal Government is simply in the game to help guarantee funding?

So far there are not many great examples of several municipalities working together. Most cities throughout Illinois are doing their own plan, not collaborating on issues even if they are similar. Most collaboration in regional areas is by people who have historically collaborated, not a lot of new collaboration. Collaboration is going to be difficult because each state has their own legislation and implementation plan and they do not have to come to an agreement.

Potential solution to collaboration is to have utilities lead the way since they are not constrained by political boundaries. Long-term electric utilities may need play a larger role in mitigation with cleaner fuels such as natural gas. For example, PG&E has established a part of their operations to work with local municipalities regarding climate action plans.

Next Steps:

Establish working group comprised of subnational leaders (municipal, state and regional) to author white paper on collaboration between various levels of government with recommendations on best practices.

Establish discussion forum to share case studies on best practices related to transportation system and land use strategies.