

Taking Action

Current Actions

The 2007-2011 NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy contained 39 actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Progress on all 39 actions has been reviewed annually since 2007. A comprehensive report on progress on these actions can be found online at www.nwtclimatechange.ca

Major actions include:

- **Green Light: Signalling the Department of Transportation's Commitment to the Environment** highlights existing environmental practices and fosters a corporate culture of environmental excellence at the Department and through the northern transportation industry. This environmental strategy was designed to spark action by individuals in each operational region of the NWT and across the Department. It contains an action plan that serves as a blueprint for priority action in the short term (0 to 2 years) and medium term (2 to 5 years).
- The **Northwest Territories Biomass Strategy**, released in February 2010, guides the increased use of biomass in the NWT, while ensuring the local harvest of wood remains sustainable. It also helps guide the actions of government departments in the development of biomass energy systems.
- The Department of Public Works and Services continues to invest in **wood pellet boiler installations** in GNWT buildings in several communities throughout the North and South Slave regions. Installations are also planned for buildings in the Dehcho and Sahtu regions. To date, 11 buildings have been converted, including two facilities using wood pellet systems on a heat provider basis. These systems are owned and operated by a private business contracted to provide the heat. Four other wood pellet system installations are planned for 2011. Feasibility studies have been conducted for another four locations.
- On-going activities offered by the Arctic Energy Alliance include the EnerGuide for Houses and the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program.

Actions by Other Organizations

The GNWT, through the 2007-2011 NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy, encourages other sectors to develop their own emission management plans and targets. Many communities and industries have adopted these plans. Some have also developed targets, which are being met. A renewed Greenhouse Gas Strategy must continue to support these actions.

What support can the 2011-2015 NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy provide to encourage other sectors to develop their emission management plans and targets?

How can the actions of other sectors, Aboriginal governments, communities and industry be better described and acknowledged in the 2011-2015 NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy?

New Actions

The GNWT is exploring some new actions, which could be included in a renewed Greenhouse Gas Strategy. These actions include carbon offsets, energy efficiency standards and continued review of carbon pricing.

Carbon Offsets – Carbon offsets involve the purchase of carbon credits from somebody who has already made reductions. The purchased offsets are used as a credit against the emissions of the purchaser. For example, a diamond mine running some of the newest and most efficient equipment in the NWT and investing in community projects to upgrade old and inefficient buildings could receive credit for the emission reductions.

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Voluntary carbon credits are available for purchase outside of the NWT. Alberta has established its own regulations to control emission intensity of industry within the province. The Alberta system includes the creation of a carbon offset program. British Columbia and Quebec have joined the Western Climate Initiative, which is establishing a cap and trade system, including a carbon offset market.

Should the NWT explore the creation of its own carbon offset system? Why or why not?

Should the NWT explore the possibility of joining Alberta or the Western Climate Initiative and participate in their carbon offset systems?

Energy Efficiency Standards – The 2007-2011 NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy includes measures to promote energy efficiency standards for buildings, houses and purchases of Energy Star appliances. These standards are applied to GNWT buildings and houses built by the NWT Housing Corporation. They are not mandatory for private homeowners or businesses. Cost analysis shows these standards can result in higher up-front purchase costs, which are rewarded by lower life-cycle operating costs and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

What is the best way to ensure that our new homes, buildings and appliances meet the highest energy standards?

Should the GNWT assume responsibility for establishing and enforcing mandatory energy efficiency standards for buildings, houses and/or appliances?

Carbon Pricing – The GNWT, through the Department of Finance, has already started to review the options for a revenue-neutral carbon tax in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Two roundtables to discuss the issue with a wide range of stakeholders have been held. Further analysis needs to be done on these options to determine how a carbon tax would impact various groups in the NWT and how a carbon tax could be designed to avoid raising the cost of living and operating a business.

ENR commissioned a quantitative study on the impacts of carbon pricing in the NWT. Initial results indicate a carbon tax would be a more efficient mechanism than a cap and trade program for influencing the growth of emissions in the NWT. The study also indicated a carbon tax would help reduce emissions because the price signal would stimulate additional energy efficiency and switching to lower carbon and renewable energy sources. Additional analysis is needed to determine the greenhouse gas emission reductions that could be achieved through a carbon tax.

Concerns around the health of our current and future economy, the competitiveness of our economy and the cost of living also need to be addressed. Acting in isolation of a national or international system could create some challenges for a small market such as the NWT. For example, the Mackenzie Gas Project could double the greenhouse gas emissions in the NWT, but would also reduce Canada's emissions by millions of tonnes through the displacement of more carbon-intensive fuels such as coal or oil. How should we recognize this contribution to the national and global cause of emissions reduction? Such issues require further analysis before a NWT carbon tax can be considered.

Should the GNWT continue exploring the establishment of carbon pricing as a mechanism to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

We Need Your Input

We invite you to send any comments, questions or concerns about the renewal of the Northwest Territories Greenhouse Gas Strategy to:

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To arrange a meeting in your community on the renewal of the NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy for 2011-2015, call (867) 873-7654.

Please submit all comments by April 30, 2011.

More information on the Northwest Territories Greenhouse Gas Strategy is available on-line at www.nwtclimatechange.ca