

Center for Clean Air Policy Urban Leaders Adaptation Program Briefing

Capitol Hill Visitors Center

July 22, 2009

Thank you, Steve, for your introduction. It's truly a pleasure to be here with so many distinguished colleagues and with Senators Kerry and Boxer as honorary co-hosts of this event.

As a global foundation that has for nearly 100 years worked to identify and attack the underlying causes of human suffering, the Rockefeller Foundation sees building resilience to the unavoidable impacts of climate change as one of the greatest contributions we can make towards achieving our mission. We realize that that we have already begun to see the impacts of climate change across the world and that these impacts will hit poor and vulnerable people the hardest. Two and a half years ago we launched a \$70 million dollar initiative on Building climate change resilience — that focuses squarely on creating robust action models on how to build climate change resilience for poor and vulnerable people. Our aim is to understand what integrated measures, products, information, skills, tools and policies are needed to build resilience domestically and internationally. In Asia we've been working to build a network of cities that anticipating their climate risks and taking proactive

steps to reduce those risks. In Africa we've been working to develop strategies to make agricultural systems more resilient to warmer and more variable climate.

In the US, we are working with a number of partners to understand what policies are needed to insure that the US is ready to face the impacts of climate change. For instance, our partners are looking at how the federal roles need to shift to better serve climate change decision support needs, and how the federal government can coordinate better to support inter-agency, state and local adaptation measures, how the military will need to rethink its roles and resources in light of increasing frequency and urgency of humanitarian missions, and how our national transportation infrastructure can be more resilient to current and future climate threats. We've been working with groups engaging churches, environmental groups, women's groups, development groups and even the national security community on climate resilience issues so that they can make their case to their leadership for the need to build greater resilience today even as we start to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

The Urban Leaders Adaptation Program of the Center for Clean Air Policy is of the first investments the Rockefeller Foundation made in this issue

area and has truly been a leader in and of itself on this issue. Their work in supporting municipal leaders in asking the climate question has been groundbreaking in demonstrating that we can understand the impacts of climate change well enough to identify what our vulnerabilities are, that we can take action at the local level to reduce those vulnerabilities, and that those actions often provide tangible benefits today and long into the future. The program has accelerated the learning of so many practitioners in the field, and has demonstrated what can be achieved through partnerships among governments, private sector, and foundations to drive change. The exemplar work of New York City, Chicago, and Seattle illustrate the power of these partnerships so vividly. The Urban Leaders Program has developed important lessons for how the Federal government can better support local governments on adaptation to drive local innovation, so that we start to build local resilience from coast to coast, and not just in a handful of leading cities.

I just want to conclude by noting that it's exciting to see so much progress on national climate adaptation policy—and that work of the Urban Leader Program and it's partners is really helping to shape the policy discussion by bringing in the voices and experiences of local government to the national level. Hopefully in time these experiences will be reflected

back through stronger federal support for local needs to increase community resilience for all of us, but in particular and the poorer, more vulnerable segments of our society. Thank you for allowing me to share these thoughts with you and I look forward to hearing from the real voices of experience in this field.