



Accommodating Global Warming

By Bruce Ramsey
May 20, 2008

Ron Sims, King County executive, came by today with representatives of the Center for Clean Air Policy. It was another climate-change thing, but with a twist: It was not about heading it off, but on how to live with it.

Idealism wants to prevent global warming. There is something very satisfying to the thought of all humanity getting together and saving the Earth. But assuming that warming here is caused by global warming, and global warming can be managed only by humanity as a whole, there is a problem. All the people of one small area can do is *their part*. The cost is focused, the benefit diffuse.

Adaptation is different. I can't hold back the tide, but I can pull up my pants. The cost is focused and the benefit is also focused. What one county does will help that county. Everybody understands this. And so, when the talk edges from managing the climate to living with it, the idealists object. Said Sims, "People say, 'You are throwing in the towel.'"

Sims doesn't think he is. He expects the county to do its part--and even be a leader--in CO2 reduction. But it won't be enough. The sea level will rise, probably by more than a foot this century. What then? We adapt.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Climate Change At Home: A time to thrive

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A bit of resilience can go a long way. With the advance of global warming, we're all going to find out how resilient our communities, governments and even ecosystems can be.

While the three major presidential candidates understand the need to limit global warming greenhouse gases, that won't address all the problems. The long-lived nature of the pollution means that part of the solution requires adapting to climate change's many effects.

The need to thrive while working to reverse global warming was the smart focus of a gathering here this week. The Center for Clean Air Policy, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, brought together King County and representatives from eight other North American cities and counties to talk about climate adaptation.

King County Executive Ron Sims said talking with Miami-Dade County, Phoenix, Toronto and other localities through the **Urban Leaders Adaptation Initiative** already is giving new insights. For instance, spurred by Phoenix and Chicago, King County is studying "heat islands," typically lower-income neighborhoods where building materials, asphalt and a scarcity of plants raise temperatures.

Chicago already has taken lessons in establishing cooling centers as hot-spell refuges from Paris, where casualties were high during a 2003 heat wave. It's not entirely coincidental that we can learn from Europe about adaptation as well as prevention of global warming and energy conservation. Sims is right when he says the Bush administration, with support from much of the public and many businesses, created essentially a decade of delay in this country's dealing with climate issues. Congress is finally working on a measure to give cities and states (Washington already is examining adaptation) help in adjusting to rising sea levels, the likelihood of more frequent and severe storms and changes in precipitation patterns.

It's encouraging that adapting to climate change fits well with other county and Seattle initiatives on health in poor communities, transit upgrades, energy efficiency and even Mayor Greg Nickels' push for car-free summers. Sims suggests that communities that adjust wisely to climate change will be the ones that thrive. Indeed, adaptation can be part and parcel of making progress on the other challenges. Resilience works.

May 20, 2008

City leaders meet in Seattle to address climate change

By JIM VALLEY
710 KIRO Reporter

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City leaders from across the country are meeting in Seattle to share their best ideas about how to design and develop communities that will have the least possible impact on climate change.

Urban growth boundaries so you're closer to work, congestion traffic pricing and buying up forest land are a few of the things King County has adapted to combat climate change.

"It's going to be tough, but it's going to be a lot less difficult for us than it will be for the communities that ignored this for so long. They will not be competitive and their quality of life will diminish significantly," said King County Executive Ron Sims.

Sims says King County, Chicago, Phoenix, Milwaukee, Los Angeles, Toronto and others will work over the next three years on an adaptation model.



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King County joins new climate effort By JOURNAL STAFF

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KING COUNTY — Yesterday, the Center for Clean Air Policy, a think tank based in Washington, D.C., announced a new initiative for climate change adaptation and mitigation called the Urban Leaders Adaptation Initiative.

The initiative has three principles: that national climate policy should support state and local adaptation planning and implementation, that federal agencies should provide adaptation assistance to state and local governments, and that a national climate service and extension network needs to be established to aid local governments.

Nine city and county governments are represented in the initiative so far, including King County, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami-Dade County. They will work to develop concrete examples of how communities can adapt to climate change, to serve as examples for other governments. The initiative is funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.