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## **Climate Trust Funding Helps Launch Fuels for Schools Program and Reduce Greenhouse Gases**

Portland, OR – On Friday, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Townsend Elementary School in Townsend, Montana, it was announced that The Climate Trust had reached an agreement with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) to purchase over 59,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas offsets from fuel replacement projects in Montana. The projects will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by converting steam boilers so that they will burn woody biomass, such as wood pellets, rather than fossil fuels. Townsend Elementary School is the first entity to convert its boiler under this program.

Funding from The Climate Trust will be used in conjunction with funding from the US Forest Service's Fuels for Schools (FFS) program to address financial barriers many schools and other entities face when converting steam boilers. This partnership between The Climate Trust and DNRC will demonstrate the importance of offset projects in catalyzing the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Under this new offset program, DNRC will work with The Climate Trust to identify schools and other public and non-profit facilities that need funding in order to convert existing boilers. The Climate Trust will provide these entities with the needed additional funding in exchange for ownership of the carbon dioxide emission reductions the projects will generate. It is anticipated that eight to ten entities throughout Montana will receive financial support.

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The funding for this offset partnership has been provided by Basin Creek Equity Partners, LLC to The Climate Trust as part of a settlement agreement with the Montana Environmental Information Center to offset greenhouse gas emissions from Basin Creek's new natural gas-fired power generating facility in Butte, Montana. "The Climate Trust is pleased to have been chosen as the organization responsible for placing the settlement funds into offset projects," said Mike Burnett, Executive Director of The Climate Trust. "It's also fortunate that we were able to develop a program that will generate offsets from projects located in Montana."

The retrofitted boilers will allow the schools and other entities to use woody biomass, which is a locally available, renewable energy source in Montana, rather than fossil fuels such as natural gas, fuel oil or propane. Projects implemented under this program, therefore, will lead to a direct reduction in atmospheric levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

"There are several schools and other institutions throughout the state that are interested in making the boiler retrofits, but extra financial assistance is needed in order to implement these important greenhouse gas reducing projects" said Angela Farr, a Biomass Utilization Coordinator for DNRC. "Our partnership with The Climate Trust will help address these financial shortfalls."

Woody biomass is considered to be a carbon-neutral fuel because as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is released from the combustion of wood in the boilers, growing trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, resulting in no net gain of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the atmosphere.

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**The Climate Trust** ([www.climatetrust.org](http://www.climatetrust.org)) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting climate change solutions by providing high quality greenhouse gas offset projects and advancing sound offset policy. The Climate Trust has invested approximately \$9 million into projects that have offset the equivalent of more than 2.7 million metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent. It is one of the largest and most experienced offset buyers in the U.S. and world markets. The organization provides offsets to power plants, regulators, businesses, other entities, and individuals. The Climate Trust's online tool ([www.CarbonCounter.org](http://www.CarbonCounter.org)) helps individuals calculate and offset their global warming footprint.

**The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation**

([www.dnrc.mt.gov](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov)) provides leadership and direction in the active management of the state's natural resources. As an agency of state government, it is responsible for promoting the stewardship of Montana's water, soil, forest, and rangeland resources and for regulating forest practices and oil and gas exploration and production.