



Lewis & Clark College
Portland, Oregon USA

NEWS

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As Senate debates greenhouse gas caps, Lewis & Clark College is first to achieve Kyoto Protocol compliance

(Portland, Ore.)—For the cost of a movie and popcorn for each student, Lewis & Clark College has become the first campus in the nation to comply with the greenhouse gas emissions targets called for in the Kyoto Protocol.

The achievement means that the campus has reduced emissions of the gases that contribute to global warming to 7 percent below what it produced in 1990. The reduction was achieved through the purchase of carbon dioxide offsets.

Offset projects reduce greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere and help mitigate climate change by funding efforts such as reforestation, green building practices or wind farms. The result is a cost-effective method that enabled Lewis & Clark College to minimize its net carbon impact. Students at the private liberal arts college spearheaded the effort. The cost to achieve compliance is estimated at \$10 per student.

“Our goal was to demonstrate that individuals can make a difference in fighting global warming,” said Laura Matson ’05, an economics major from St. Louis Park, Minn. Students raised \$16,400 to purchase carbon offsets through the Climate Trust, a Portland-based nonprofit group that promotes climate change solutions by providing greenhouse gas offset projects and advancing offset policy.

“Offsets are an important tool in reducing our impact on the global climate,” said Michael Ashford, deputy director of the Climate Trust. “Offsets enable more reductions to occur with already limited resources.”

The College’s achievement comes as a Senate vote is expected October 29 on the McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship Act. The bill would cap emissions of the gases that cause global warming, but at a level below the Kyoto Protocol targets.

Matson, along with Brian Erickson ’06, a biology major from Kirkwood, Mo., and Julian Dautremont-Smith, from Allentown, Pa., an environmental studies major who graduated last May, inventoried the amount of campus emissions, suggested methods of reduction, lobbied for funding to purchase offsets, and launched an educational campaign to explain the protocol’s relevance to the campus community. Students from the campus group Students Engaged in Eco-Defense helped organize the campaign.

“This achievement is the result of students being engaged at a very high level in environmental policy,” said Eban Goodstein, professor of economics at Lewis & Clark. “The students engaged the science, economics and politics of global warming. Kyoto Protocol compliance through offset purchases appears to be quite affordable. The example of Lewis & Clark College indicates that colleges and universities are the perfect laboratory in which to examine the larger implications of emissions reduction efforts.”

The college will receive a certificate honoring the protocol compliance effort in November from College Climate Response, an organization of faculty members from across the country who are engaged in analyzing greenhouse gas inventories. The campus plans to mark receipt of the certificate with a lecture about global warming issues.

For more information, visit www.lclark.edu/~seed/kyoto.html or the Climate Trust Web site at www.climatetrust.org.

About The Climate Trust

The Climate Trust is a nonprofit organization formed in 1997 in response to landmark Oregon legislation requiring new power plants to counter their global warming impact. This innovative legislation allows power plant developers to meet this carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission standard by making a payment to The Climate Trust. These funds and the funds provided by participants in the Greenhouse Gas Partnership Program are used to stimulate projects that avoid, displace or sequester CO₂ emissions. These projects are called offsets because they offset the production of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

Available sources for this story:

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- Climate Trust: Michael Ashford, deputy director, and Erica Graetz, program/operations manager