



The  
Climate  
Trust

# News Release

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## **The Climate Trust, NW Natural Launch Innovative Greenhouse Gas Offset Program for Natural Gas Customers**

**PORTLAND, Ore.** - NW Natural has partnered with The Climate Trust to create "Smart Energy," the first carbon offset program in the United States to be launched by a local gas distribution company. The program will allow NW Natural residential and commercial customers to offset the carbon dioxide created by their natural gas use.

Funds from the program will support projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A unique aspect of the Smart Energy program is the focus on the implementation of "biogas" projects, which capture methane from cow manure to keep it out of the atmosphere. As a greenhouse gas, methane is 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Focusing on biogas allows NW Natural customers to offset their natural gas emissions with a project that utilizes a similar renewable resource.

Biogas is created when manure is placed in a machine called a biodigester, designed to capture methane gas released by decomposing material. When properly treated, biogas can be substituted for natural gas to generate electricity or, as expected in the future, added to a pipeline system and used in homes and businesses. Currently, biogas can only be produced in limited quantities. NW Natural hopes that through programs like Smart Energy, biogas can become a realistic source of renewable energy.

Sean Clark, Director of Offset Programs at The Climate Trust, believes Smart Energy is a well designed offset program offering for NW Natural customers.

"Implementation of new offset projects specifically for the program and a focus on high quality is the right move," said Clark. "This will increase customer participation and interest by adding tangibility to this intangible commodity."

NW Natural chose The Climate Trust to implement and manage the program due to the organization's reputation for acquiring and delivering high quality offsets. Unlike many offset program implementers in the U.S. offset market, The Climate Trust implements and manages all their projects to assure they will result in verifiable greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Once a project has passed through The Climate Trust's high-quality criteria screens and is selected, the organization manages the project over the life of the contract. The Climate Trust will be utilizing the latest standards and carbon methodologies for the implementation of all projects acquired under the Smart Energy Program.

Though customers can't begin signing up until Sept. 10, the program has already won the support of Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski.

"I'm pleased that companies like NW Natural are continuing to support Oregon in leading the fight against global warming with this innovative approach," said Kulongoski.

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