

Biochar Action Proposal

Policy Action Council

Carbon Offset Credits for Growers

Currently, farmers only receive RGGI offset credits for three services:

- 1) methane destruction (manure disposal)
- 2) afforestation
- 3) conservation grassland

Farmers don't get carbon credit for soil and tillage practices to increase and maintain high soil carbon levels, such as adding biochar or organic agriculture (5% organic matter). RGGI is our best opportunity in America to adopt a plan to sanction biochar so growers get carbon offset credits for carbon sequestration.

Of 10 RGGI states, Vermont is the best to introduce a proposal. If we make the case in VT, with solid scientific and political support, VT can make a proposal to RGGI board of directors. And if RGGI sanctions biochar sequestration strategy, it will be far easier to make the case to other states, compacts, and a federal program—if Congress ever passes one.

To draft a biochar sanction proposal, introduce it to VT officials, and get approval by the entire RGGI board will be a complex technical and administrative strategy that requires a dedicated, skilled and diversified team, and a few months of consistent, steady, timely effort.

Currently, the biochar network has no infrastructure to tackle this task. No policy council exists to focus on strategy—no way to track who puts biochar in soil, to quantify and verify amounts of carbon sequestered, to aggregate small units per farm into utility-size mega-units, and to manage this protocol. All must be built from the bottom up to develop and submit the RGGI sanction proposal.

In the wake of increasingly extreme weather in the Northeast, we must this monumental effort. We can't wait for sea level rise and extreme weather to become routine to advance this crucial effort to incentivize adding biochar to soil.

A Policy Action Council was formed to create necessary infrastructure, recruit players to make this proposal move from idea to reality, assemble documents and technical testimony to make the case.

A Steering Committee holds monthly conference calls. If policy formulation and action is your interest to create a sustainable human future, email to get conference call details.

New York—and every RGGI state—is falling into bankruptcy. Let's start raising revenues through carbon offsets. Let's reward farmers for sequestering carbon and sustainable soil management.

Let's get serious and get into action. Our human future hangs in the balance.

Status Report March 2010

Carbon Offset Credits

www.rggi.org

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a cooperative effort by ten Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states to limit greenhouse gas emissions. RGGI is the first mandatory, market-based effort in the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The ten RGGI states have capped and will reduce CO₂ emissions from the power sector 10% by 2018. The ten states in this cap & trade compact are: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

RGGI is composed of CO₂ Budget Trading Programs implemented in each state as state regulations, based on a RGGI Model Rule, with CO₂ allowance reciprocity. Regulated power plants use CO₂ allowances issued by any participant state to comply with the state program governing their facility. Together, the ten state programs function as a single regional market for carbon emissions—America's only mandatory, state-run, cap-and-trade carbon exchange.

States auction emission allowances (carbon offset credits) to utilities, and invest proceeds in energy efficiency, renewable energy and clean energy technology. RGGI will spur innovation in clean energy economy and create green jobs in each state.

Last year was the first six auctions. The last (Dec. 2, 2009) raised over \$61.5 million, boosting proceeds to over \$494 million. December 2009 allowances sold at a cheap price of only \$2.05. The next auction will be June 9, 2010.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, RGGI uses market-based cap-and-trade:

- Establish a multi-state CO₂ emissions budget (cap) that decreases gradually until it is 10% lower than the start
- Require electric generators to keep allowances equal to their CO₂ emissions for a 3-year control period
- Provide market-based emissions auctions and trading where electric power generators buy, sell and trade CO₂ emissions allowances
- Use allowance auction proceeds to fund low-carbon solutions, including energy efficiency and clean renewable energy, such as solar and wind power
- Employ offsets (emissions reduction or sequestration projects) for companies

to meet their compliance obligations

RGGI's approach means CO₂ cap reductions will initially be modest, to provide predictable market signals and regulatory certainty. Electricity producers can plan and invest in low-carbon projects and avoid dramatic electric price impacts.

"RGGI auctions run like clockwork," said David Littell, Commissioner, Maine Dept of Environmental Protection, and Chair, RGGI Board of Directors. "Six successful auctions, more than 100 bidders, \$494 million for green energy and green jobs—RGGI is showing cap-and-trade works."

An Invitation

The Huntsville Project

Earth Day 2010—Today, the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, we are launching a campaign called The Huntsville Project to inform the global public about biochar, one of the most promising developments in our fight against climate change.

This Earth Day, we look back on a year when James Cameron's *Avatar* film on environmental crisis and restoration, swept box offices around the globe. What if there is a real-life answer to solve the real world problems of climate change, peak oil and global food security? Would you want leaders of the G8 and G20 to know about and endorse it?

On June 25, 2010 the G8 will meet in Huntsville Ontario. On June 26 and 27, the G20 will then meet in Toronto. We are asking global leaders to support this important new clean technology.

I encourage you to sign our "Huntsville Petition" and put biochar on the global agenda. At our new website, you can learn about biochar and sign our petition.

www.newcarboneyconomy.info/page6.php

The biochar description on our website is a good place to start. It is cited around the web as an authoritative, non-technical definition.

Lloyd Helferty, Engineering Technologist
Principal, Biochar Consulting (Canada)
www.biochar-consulting.ca
Steering Committee, Canadian Biochar Initiative
President, Co-founder, Biochar-Ontario
Advisory Committee Member, IBI

U.S. Biochar Initiative

At the August 2009 North American Biochar conference in Boulder CO, the U.S. Biochar Initiative was formed, led by Gloria Flora of Sustainable Obtainable Solutions (SOS) in Helena, Montana. USBI is walking through the initial steps to be formally organized and tax exempt.

The next national biochar conference will offer an opportunity for local and regional groups to assemble and develop strategy and structure to advance biochar from the national platform.

for more information:

Gloria Flora

gflora@s-o-solutions.org
www.biochar-us.org

Pioneer Valley Biochar Initiative

After April 2008 StepItUp climate action, activist citizens met in Belchertown MA to plot a path to green energy. They focused on biochar pyrolysis as their chosen technology. Last winter, this group incorporated as Pioneer Valley Biochar Initiative and opened a website with an online forum.



"We are farmers, professors, students, and citizens who promote public awareness of science that biochar can boost soil fertility, enhance crop health, sink CO₂, restore soil as a living natural community—benefits crucial to our climate, energy and food supply crisis.

"PVBI advocates environmentally responsible biochar research, production and application from clean biomass such as farm & yard waste and storm damage, and using process heat from char making. We invite Pioneer Valley communities to learn and teach others to sequester carbon by biochar production and soil use."

www.pvbiochar.org

National Conference Biochar 2010

Iowa State Univ., June 27-30

Recent advances in biochar science and technology will be showcased to advance our understanding of biochar science and policy issues as both an agent to sequester carbon and an amendment for soils.

Featured Speakers

Johannes Lehmann (Cornell University)

Julie Major (Intrntl. Biochar Initiative)

Laurens Rademakers (Biochar Fund)

www.biochar2010.org

Let's Price Carbon Now, For Business' Sake

by Gary Hirshberg (Stonyfield Farm)
and Steve Walker (NEWP)

Renewable Energy World, May 6, 2010

When it comes to climate change, the only thing the U.S. has more of than culpability is opportunity. Yet, as a nation, we continue to abdicate leadership. One of the most serious global challenges we face, climate change is not just coming; broad scientific consensus indicates it's already here.

Fossil fuel interests, not surprisingly, predict economic catastrophe will result from climate action. We've seen these scare tactics before: removing lead from gasoline will bankrupt oil companies; seat belts and airbags will cripple auto sales; acid rain, smog and mercury controls will cause price shocks in electric bills. Such claims weren't believable then; they're not believable now.

On-the-ground experience of companies already cutting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions shows huge opportunity for our nation's economy.

Stonyfield Farm is a good example. We began calculating our carbon footprint in the early 1990s—before the term was coined. With only our mission and elbow grease, our employees raced up the learning curve. Contrary to conventional wisdom about "low-hanging fruit," our list of innovation opportunities grew rather than shrank. Even after a decade, recent achievements astonish: each Stonyfield yogurt cup requires 19% less energy than 2007, saving over \$500,000 per year. Packaging innovations shed 600,000 pounds, saving \$780,000. Transportation GHG emissions dropped 40% from 2006 to 2008, saving \$2.5 million. A digester built to treat our wastewater converted a problem into clean energy, saving \$500,000 in two years. Our efficiency efforts saved \$2.6 million per year in three years, supporting 45 jobs—an eighth of our New Hampshire workforce.

Stonyfield's experience isn't unique. Companies across the U.S. are finding cost savings and competitive advantage through efficiency. Nike reduced GHGs from its operations and travel by 18% from 1998 to 2005, despite square footage increase. Timberland targeted 50% reduction in absolute GHG emissions for 2010 from 2006. Wal-Mart's new stores

will cut energy use 30-50% and save five million gallons of water per year.

Other companies are seizing on clean energy solutions to help businesses and consumers save energy and money. New England Wood Pellet in Jaffrey produces 150,000 tons a year of clean, sustainably-produced wood pellets—enough to heat 60,000 homes and businesses, and reduce the \$14 billion that flows out of the Northeast each year, much into pockets of unfriendly countries. Economical and versatile, wood pellets are a win-win alternative to fossil fuels, with only 13% of the carbon footprint of heating oil.

Good as these efforts are, we must go broader and deeper throughout the economy to prevent profound climate changes. That won't happen on its own, so Congress must to impose a market price on heat-trapping emissions. If the U.S. Senate can't act promptly after last year's House action, then U.S. EPA must regulate GHGs under the Clean Air Act.

Our economy may be weak, but successful companies and economies "retool" in downturns to boost future productivity and job creation. A wave of innovation and jobs in energy technologies is emerging in this region and globally. Initial investments to lead this charge are already happening, but small compared to those that policy certainty and a carbon price can create. We don't have all day either; many nations are ahead of the U.S. on job-creating clean energy technologies.

Washington's best contribution is to limit and put a price on carbon—right now. Then get out of the way as businesses help our nation meet 21st century opportunities. Morphing our energy system from its historical fossil foundation to a new emphasis on efficiency, innovation, renewables, and distributed generation will provide innumerable new revenue sources and businesses, save money, keep it closer to home, create millions of new jobs, enhance our global competitiveness, and boost our national security.

What on Earth are we waiting for?

Let's get on with it.

