



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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PSC Opens Five Cases to Explore Recommendations by the Governor's Task Force on Global Warming

MADISON – Today, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) opened five cases exploring recommendations set-forth in the Governor's Task Force on Global Warming's Interim Report.

“The issue of global warming is one the biggest challenges our generation has faced, and clearly the time to act is now,” said Chairperson Dan Ebert. “Today's decision to open these five cases is a pivotal point in the state's fight against global warming. These cases will soon turn the hard work of the Global Warming Task Force into policies that will have an impact on the health and wealth of Wisconsin while positioning the state as a national leader in the fight against global warming. I want to thank Governor Doyle for his leadership in addressing this issue, and Global Warming Task Force Co-Chairs Roy Thilly, Tia Nelson and all its members for their hard work and commitment.”

Today's action begins the process of looking at five different recommendations by the Governor's Task Force on Global Warming. Those recommendations include exploring issues such as:

- Price signals in rate design and load management options
- Assessing the wind power generation potential of the Great Lakes
- The potential for geologic carbon sequestration of carbon dioxide produced by the state's electricity generation fleet
- Electric rate design that promotes conservation and efficiency advocacy by utilities
- Increasing conservation and energy efficiency goals

"The Task Force issued its Interim Report because of our unanimous agreement on the need for the state to move forward immediately to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Roy Thilly, Co-Chair of the Governor's Task Force on Global Warming. "The changes in regulatory policy the Commission will consider are very important to achieving this objective. We are very pleased with the PSC's decision to pursue our recommendations promptly."

“It’s not every day that a group as diverse as this Task Force can reach unanimous agreement on policy recommendations,” added Governor’s Task Force on Global Warming Co-Chair Tia Nelson. “I’m very pleased that the PSC recognizes how significant that is and is wasting no time getting to work on our recommendations. This is an essential component to establishing Wisconsin as a leader in climate change policy and greater energy independence.”

Governor Doyle signed Executive Order 191 to create the Task Force on Global Warming, and bring together a prominent and diverse group of key Wisconsin business, industry, government, energy and environment leaders to examine the effects and solutions to global warming in Wisconsin. Using current national and local research, the Task Force analyzes possible solutions to global warming challenges that pose a threat to Wisconsin’s economic and environmental health. The Task Force is charged with creating a state plan of action to deliver to the Governor to reduce Wisconsin’s contribution to global warming.

A greenhouse gas inventory conducted as part of the Task Force process indicates that from 1990 through 2003, greenhouse gas emissions in Wisconsin increased at an annual average rate of 1.2 percent, from 105.9 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent in 1990 to 123.1 million tons in 2003. Computer modeling done for the Task Force predicts that, in the absence of any change in existing policies, the annual emissions in Wisconsin will reach 156.8 million tons by 2024. This same modeling predicts that Wisconsin’s electric power sector emissions will increase annually by 1.4 percent through 2024, in the absence of any action to limit business as usual.

The decision to recommend early action steps and not wait for the Task Force’s final report this spring came after the Task Force determined the sooner greenhouse gas emissions are reduced, the easier it will be to address the need for substantial long-term reductions in a cost affective manner. The PSC will partner with the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands in examining some of the issues addressed in today’s dockets. A final report to the Governor is anticipated in May of this year.

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