

Press Release

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-7370
Fax: 517-373-1373 • E-mail: sendemstaff@senate.michigan.gov



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Contact: Liz Kerr
Phone:

Senate Democrats Turn Up Heat on Climate Change with New Initiatives *New Efforts Set State Goals, Empower Consumers to Help Protect Air and Water*

LANSING- Senate Democrats announced today new global warming initiatives that help implement policies on a local and individual level to address the growing threat of global climate change. The measures will make sure Michigan is part of the solution instead of part of the problem. It will also help empower consumers and homeowners to do their part to help our air and water while saving them money.

“This legislation will ensure that there are more opportunities each day for residents to have a positive impact on the world around us,” said Sen. Glenn S. Anderson. “These efforts will protect their pocketbooks and bring jobs to Michigan.”

Some highlights of the Global Warming Local Action initiatives include:

- Legislation sponsored by Senator Glenn S. Anderson (D-Westland) to make investments in small-scale energy generation, like rooftop solar panels or windmills, more cost effective by allowing the business or residence to sell extra power back to utility companies when they are generating more energy than they need.
- An initiative sponsored by Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) to create a sales tax exemption and income tax credit for certain alternative energy projects.
- A bill sponsored by Sen. Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) to provide low interest loans for investments in energy efficiency in homes. Many low income home owners are forced to choose cheaper, more inefficient appliances when replacing items like furnaces, and suffer increased long-term costs as a result of the necessity of their situation. Low interest loans will help offset the higher costs of more efficient appliances and help generate savings in the long run for home owners.
- A bill sponsored by Sen. Gilda Z. Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods) that exempts the gains in tax assessed value gained by the installation of solar, wind, or other renewable energy generating units.
- Legislation sponsored by Sen. Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor) that will set greenhouse gas reduction targets to 1990 levels by 2020 and further reduces emission to 25% of 1990 levels by 2050.

“While the world continues to address this threat on a grand scale, it’s sometimes hard for individual people to feel like they’re making a difference,” said Senator Jacobs.

“These bills would implement incentives that can bring about big change down the road, while helping the bottom line of Michigan families.”

These local solutions to a growing problem couldn't come at a better time. Representatives from nations around the world have been meeting in Bali, Indonesia from December 3-14. The Bali Conference has three goals: to start negotiations on a post-Kyoto treaty, to set the agenda for those meetings, and agree on when those negotiations have to conclude. Given the strength of the evidence expressed in the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report, and the growing concern among climate change scientists that we need to act quickly and aggressively, it is likely the resulting treaty will be considerably stronger than Kyoto.

“The residents in this state are worried about the increasingly high energy prices. These bills aimed at trimming energy consumption will allow homeowners to make a difference and save money,” said Senator Clarke.

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