

Global Warming and New England: Options for Action

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Abstract

Global warming is a growing threat that the United States refuses to seriously confront. Action at the state and regional level can serve as a suggestion to the Administration that steps must be taken at a higher sphere. The New England region is a logical venue for adopting strategies for carbon emissions reductions because of its interconnected energy network, its growing reliance on demand side management, and because of regional research and planning efforts on energy and the environment currently underway.

Major questions addressed in this thesis include: What are the best methods for reducing carbon in New England? How can reductions be achieved in the most politically expedient, least cost fashion? How can a chosen strategy be endowed with continuity?

Evidence supports the conclusion that increased efficiency and repowering of old power plants are the most effective methods of reducing carbon dioxide emissions in New England. This paper explores seven different approaches currently at different stages of development in the region, comparing their relative impacts on promoting efficiency and carbon dioxide emissions reductions, and theorizes an ideal strategy for confronting global warming in New England. The "Ultimate Plan" is a regional comprehensive energy plan that includes a policy of internalizing environmental externalities and a clear vision of making energy choices with the least possible air pollution emissions, including carbon dioxide. Such a regional effort would be the strongest action on global warming to date in the United States.