



STATE OF WISCONSIN

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## **Lt. Governor/ UW-Stevens Point Summit Sets Course for Action on Climate Change in Regions Across Wisconsin**

*Hundreds of Local Leaders Sign Resolution to Act*

STEVENS POINT, WI – More than two hundred local government, private industry, environmental and other leaders from over 70 Wisconsin communities gathered today at the Wisconsin Climate Change Summit in Stevens Point to create a framework for regional and local responses to global climate change and energy independence and sign a Climate Change Regional Action Resolution. The summit, a part of Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton's *Green Economy Agenda*, was convened by Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton and co-hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

"The President-elect committed this week to investment in a green future for this country; we're making sure local leaders will be ready to move those resources, to transform it into new jobs and economic growth in Wisconsin," said Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton. "We're putting in place a power grid of informed decision-makers, ready to flip the switch on renewable energy and energy conservation in this state."

Summit participants heard from environmental policy expert, former California EPA director and author of *Lives Per Gallon: The True Cost of Our Oil Addiction* Terry Tamminen. He said we have the choice today between sustainable living or becoming a footnote to human history: "We must shape our future before it shapes us." Tamminen described a nation that has become slaves to fossil fuels, that "puts a living room on wheels to go to the supermarket", as a nation that also has the wherewithal to unleash a creative fury in a clean tech revolution.

The Midwest director for the Union of Concerned Scientists, Ron Burke, mapped out the cost of inaction on global climate change and graphed a plan for the leaders assembled to reduce emissions in their community. He emphasized that real progress starts with local action and that Wisconsin can lead from the center of the country.

Sessions throughout the day covered topics specific to transportation, bio-fuels and bio-energy, local food systems and community purchasing, opportunities for business

innovations, and specific predictions for uneven climate change patterns across the state. Implications for industry and recreation were spelled out – i.e. even a 5.5 degree water temperature increase would eliminate trout habitats in Wisconsin.

Local leaders signed on to a Climate Change Regional Action Resolution. This resolution committed signatories to:

- Develop a community action plan built around the potential for governmental, non-profit and private actions to mitigate and adapt to the challenges of climate change. This plan will include options for energy, transportation, waste management, municipal infrastructure, community purchasing and local food purchasing.
- Create specific goals for the reduction of greenhouse gases and a timeframe for reaching those goals.
- Develop and implement a community-wide public information and education plan built around the issues of climate change and energy independence.

The summit's unique form placed a region's lead elected officials –mayors, village presidents, etc.—at the center of teams representing leaders from private industry, economic development, all levels of government, education, media and environmental organizations. Following the summit, participants are expected to take action in their own communities.

Summit planning committee member Manitowoc Mayor Kevin Crawford said, “The most important element of the summit is the call to action –issued by Lt. Governor Lawton—to make the sustainability movement sustainable in each of our Wisconsin communities. Certainly the make-up of the summit has elevated the concerns regarding climate change and a community's ability to achieve positive, incremental change.”

Stevens Point State Representative Louis Molepske heralded the summit as “an excellent opportunity to bring together local government leaders, scientists and industry to head off a future event that all of us do not want to see happen – disaster owing to our unwillingness to react with urgency to global climate change.”

Kenosha County Board member Dayvin Hallmon noted that “for a young elected official, it is inspiring to be positioned to do something that seriously impacts people and makes the world a better and more livable place.”

Summit participants submitted forms listing their own work in progress to reduce their carbon footprint, outlined their strategic plan going forward and what kind of assistance they will need to support their success. Data gathered will be compiled in a report to be submitted to the governor and all members of the state legislature.

“International leaders today plan gather at the United Nations Climate Summit in Poznan, Poland, while Wisconsin leaders worked a parallel path in Stevens Point, Wisconsin,” Lt. Governor Lawton said. “We're putting the Wisconsin Idea to work on the world's most pressing challenge: we know that solving the climate crisis is essential to solve the economic and energy security crisis, and we know the work begins here at home.”

“I'm thrilled that the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point hosted the Wisconsin Climate Change Summit,” said UW-Stevens Point Chancellor Linda Bunnell. “UWSP is dedicated

to maintaining a sustainable campus and community as part of our strategic vision for the University. I believe our campus was the perfect host for this historic summit.”

The summit was co-hosted by the Office of the Lt. Governor and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Partner organizations included the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities, the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, the Midwest Renewable Energy Association and 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin.

The conference itself contained a “Green” design. Proceeds from the registration fee will go to fund carbon offsets through long-term on-campus environmental projects. NatureWise, the Wisconsin Public Service renewable energy program, provided 100% renewable energy for the conference, and most of the food served was locally grown and prepared.

***A full copy of the Climate Change Regional Action Resolution can be found online at: [http://ltgov.wisconsin.gov/issues\\_view.asp?issueid=32&locid=126](http://ltgov.wisconsin.gov/issues_view.asp?issueid=32&locid=126)***