



# WORLD CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT



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## *In Copenhagen*

### **ANDERSON'S NOTEBOOK: Copenhagen Stormed by the States, Provinces, Cities, and Regions**

**C**OPENHAGEN—Why would I, an American lawyer, chose this particular time to write about climate change from the state, municipal, and local government perspective, with an iffy global accord here in Copenhagen hanging in the balance and a U.S. climate law still a long way from approval by Congress?

Diane Wittenberg, executive director of The Climate Registry, told me Monday (Dec. 14) that, but for what state and local governments in the United States have done and are already committed by law to do, it would have been practically impossible for President Obama to come to Copenhagen this Friday and commit to goals that Congress has yet to approve. Diane is executive director of the Registry, which is governed by 41 states and all the Canadian provinces and territories. She is a colleague in the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP-15) delegations to which we belong.

Diane's point, and I agree with it, is solidly grounded in the U.S. federal system. Climate undertakings by sub-national political jurisdictions and the voluntary actions of major U.S. companies, make the President's promise of at least a 17 percent rollback in greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels possible.

What's more, this story is repeating itself around the world: local governments offer a laboratory for trying different approaches to residential, commercial, and transportation carbon efficiencies and gives confidence and a push to national leaders at the COP to work harder for a strong final agreement.

Meanwhile yesterday (Dec. 15), the sovereign-nation delegates appeared to be caught up in a frenzy of inaction.

Their formal deliberations did not begin until 3 p.m. local time. They reminded me of Chaucer's lawyer in

the Canterbury Tales. "Nowher so bisy a man as he thernas, and yet he seemed bisier than he was." The outline of an agreement on main issues on reducing emissions from tropical forest deforestation and degradation seems, however, to have been worked out.

**Schwarzenegger Touts Role for Cities, States.** The situation was definitely otherwise in other venues throughout the city. Across Copenhagen the roles of state, provincial, municipal, county, and regional governments were under lively and productive discussion. For the few thousand attendees for whom local action is their focus, Copenhagen yesterday was, as Hemingway wrote of the city of Paris, a moveable feast.

Governor Schwarzenegger gave a rousing speech yesterday in the Bella Center, the congested heart of the COP, and another to our delegation last night, reminding the conference that the grassroots are where the economic and technical transformation for climate began and where he believes it ultimately will be implemented.

He called on the United Nations to convene an international summit of states, provinces, cities, and regions in the near future and modestly offered to host it in San Francisco, a city "everyone loves to visit." The clear implication was, to stand the process on its head. Begin with a more distributed local approach and build up from there to get more done. He ended by thanking the delegates and repeating both times both times his catch line—"I'll be back."

The Governor has been quite the sensation here. Not quite like Obama the candidate in Germany, but close. He was guest of honor the evening before at a reception attended by U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu and hosted at the residence by Laurie Fulton, Ambassador to Denmark.

I had the chance to welcome Schwarzenegger as the governor of the eighth largest economy in the world, and therefore among the first of the 130 or so major heads of state to arrive for the Summit. Later yesterday he joined a virtual phalanx of mayors and premiers from the United States and Canada to re-emphasize

state and provincial renewable portfolio standards, green technology development, state and regional emissions cap-and-trade initiatives, and smart growth strategies—in short, the power and leverage of state and local entities to encourage a new low-carbon economy, no matter what Congress or the COP may finally produce.

The regional climate programs for which so much has been expected also got their chance. For example, David Littell, the Commissioner of Maine's Department of Environmental Protection, and the new Chair of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), was on programs to elaborate on its current status in the state-local-federal "marble cake" climate federalism that the United States has practiced during the past few years of relative federal inaction on the climate front.

RGGI covers the six New England states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, plus the mid-Atlantic states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York.

A total of 34 states have formal Climate Action Plans now and three more are on the verge. Perhaps most important of all, 31 states have renewable energy portfolio standards, alternate energy plans, or similar goals in place.

At the same time, the week-long Climate Summit for Mayors was taking place just down the street. Seventy urban city areas worldwide, representing half the world's population and 75 percent of its carbon emissions, have sent hundreds of representatives and 55 prominent mayors to their Summit.

**Long Lines at Bella Center Spread to Other Venues.** Digging deeper toward the grassroots, the thousand-member Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) has organized a series of panels to the same end.

I set out with my colleague Nancy Skinner, an Assembly Member from California, to attend an ICLEI event at Copenhagen's majestic old city hall, only to find that the notorious Bella-style jam-ups and clearance processes had infected even this off-site event. No number of calls to Copenhagen COP-15 security could clear the way.

The irony was that twenty years ago, Assemblywoman Skinner played a seminal role in creating the very organization to which access proved temporarily difficult.

But we were not alone. All across town anxious participants in other sessions braved the 2 degrees Celsius weather trying to participate. It was not lost on us that 2 degrees is the number we seek to avoid as the other, global temperature rises.

By FREDERICK R. ANDERSON

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*Frederick R. Anderson is a partner in the Washington office of McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP. He is attending the Copenhagen conference as a member of the California Action Reserve delegation that includes U.S. private sector and government officials. He advises companies on climate and energy matters and was on the National Academy of Science's Board on Atmospheric Sciences and Climate. He also chairs the boards of two international environmental NGOs.*