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Environmental Services Division

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FINAL REPORT ON GREENHOUSE GAS CUTBACKS SUBMITTED TO GOVERNOR AND IOWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Iowa Climate Change Advisory Council came to consensus on two greenhouse gas reduction scenarios and 56 policy options in their 469-page final report to the Governor and General Assembly released today during a news conference at the Iowa State Capitol.

Charged with this task in 2007, the 23-member, governor-appointed Council, along with 4 state assemblymen and numerous technical advisors, studied more than 300 policy options before the Council pared their choices to 56.

The two scenarios are: 1) 50 percent cutback from 2005 emissions by 2050, with interim goals of 1 percent by 2012 and 11 percent by 2020; and 2) 90 percent cutback from 2005 emissions by 2050, with interim goals of 3 percent by 2012 and 22 percent by 2020.

If all 56 strategies are carried out, according to projections supplied by The Center for Climate Strategies (which facilitated the process and provided technical assistance to the Council), the 90 percent cutback scenario can be met. The options promote energy efficiency, use of fuels and practices that pollute less, and development of new technologies that reduce or do not contribute to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

The Council's decisions were based on an Iowa greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast developed by The Center for Climate Strategies in close consultation with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and many Council and subcommittee members.

“We are pleased that about half of the options would save Iowans money due to reduced energy use,” said Council Chairman Gerald Schnoor. “Some options have upfront costs, but yield savings in the long run. Overall, the options create jobs and support a prospering Iowa economy, as well as reduce greenhouse gases.”

Many scientists believe mankind’s production of greenhouse gases contributes to global warming which would cause more extreme weather events such as flooding and droughts. Some contributing sources include fuel combustion to generate electricity and power automobiles, some farming activities, and clear-cutting of forests that store carbon dioxide.

The energy industry, which accounts for 31 percent of Iowa’s greenhouse gas emissions, are most impacted in the Council’s options. The industry would be required to increase renewable energy sources and reduce carbon dioxide discharges.

Energy efficiency options include user education, better building codes, government lead by example, high efficiency appliance standards, and rates and technologies that promote less energy use.

During the news conference Representative Donovan Olson (D - District 48), Environmental Protection Committee Chairman and a non-voting, ex officio member of the Council, suggested four future tasks for the Council: 1) prioritize the recommendations, 2) discuss funding for climate transition activities, 3) adaptation to meet the climate changes that are already occurring, and 4) education for Iowans about what they can do to meet these challenges.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources provides staff assistance to the Iowa Climate Change Advisory Council.

The Council’s report is located at www.iaclimatechange.us. David Sassoon of The Center for Climate Strategies can be reached at (212) 380-1379 or sassoon.david@gmail.com