

## Local News

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### Local coalition announces climate advisory group

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A local climate change-based coalition group announced the formation of a new scientific advisory group Tuesday to provide a platform for scientists to share their research and ideas with other North Dakota scientists and the general public.

Members of North Dakota Climate Solutions Partnership, which created the advisory panel, said they created the advisory board in part as a response to the recent release of private e-mails from prominent American and European scientists which exposed an uncertainty and division among climate scientists sparking a backlash by the public.

"We live in a society where on the one hand we are very dependent on science to tell us various things and on the other hand when science reveals findings on climate change, the public is resistant to accept it," said John Brauner, chair of the Biology Department at Jamestown College and a member of the advisory board.

Twenty scientists, all from the state's college and university system, make up the advisory board and recently released a joint Statement of Principles on Climate Change, where they detailed their collective position on the issue.

"We believe that the Earth's climate is warming and that there is strong scientific consensus that human activity is a significant factor," said Andrei Kirilenko, associate professor in the Earth Systems Science and Policy Department at the University of North Dakota. "Scientific consensus on climate change has been affirmed by international scientific bodies and polls of scientists' opinions."

Mindi Grieve, spokeswoman for the organization, said the advisory board plans to begin disseminating educational material to its member organizations and the public beginning in February or March, but exactly how that will be done has yet to be decided.

As the second-most fossil fuel dependent state, NDCSP members said the voices of North Dakota's scientists and citizens must be heard.

"North Dakota has a big stake in climate change," said Jason Schaefer of the National Wildlife Foundation, one of seven environmental groups that makes up the NDCSP. "We receive more than \$250 million in revenue from hunting and outdoor activities each year so we need to protect the great habitat that we have here. The risk of drought and warming from climate change is a real risk indeed."

"I think North Dakotans are aware that we need to do something, especially with the EPA's plans to regulate greenhouse gases, so we want to make sure North Dakota is at the table and poised to take advantage of the new green economy," Grieve said.

Formed in June 2009, NDCSP is a coalition of seven state environmental and agricultural groups that formed to build state and federal support for solutions to global climate change. Coalition members are: Ducks Unlimited, Environmental Law & Policy Center, Foundation for Agricultural and Rural Resources Management and Sustainability (FARRMS), National Wildlife Federation, North Dakota Farmers Union, Pew Environment Group and Prairie Climate Stewardship Network.

#### Fact Box

Three MSU professors join advisory group

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Three biology professors from Minot State University recently joined the Scientific Advisory Group of the North Dakota Climate Solutions Partnership, a coalition of seven state environmental and agricultural groups that formed to build state and federal support for solutions to global climate change.

Associate professor Heidi Super, and professors Chris Beachy and Chris Keller, recently joined 17 other scientists from seven North Dakota colleges and universities to create the Advisory Group, which will act as a forum for communication for the state's scientific community and will be used to develop and disperse information on their collective belief to the general public.

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