

Utah Department of Environmental Quality Press Releases

For the Year 2008

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Utah Report on the Environment 2008: Milestones Made to Air, Land and Water

December 30, 2009

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer

Salt Lake City, Utah – Utah’s environment continues to improve due to significant milestones achieved in 2008, according to the Department of Environmental Quality’s (DEQ) annual report released today.

“In 2008 we made some notable improvements to our air, land and water,” said Bill Sinclair, acting executive director of DEQ. “The achievements are a result of collaborative efforts with communities, local governments, the State Legislature, federal partners and many stakeholders.”

The 23-page report highlights successes and challenges in each of the four main sections: air, climate change, land and water.

For instance, retrofitting old school buses with cleaner technology is helping improve air quality and protecting the health of schoolchildren – efforts made possible due to partnerships with schools, governments and clean air advocates. Meanwhile, plans are in the making to meet tougher federal standards on certain air pollutants that will improve the air for future generations.

Benchmarks were set for cutting greenhouse gasses to combat climate change and ensuring a sustainable energy-efficient future while a growing number of businesses are signing up for the Climate Registry, which lays the groundwork to begin reporting greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2008, significant progress was achieved in the clearing of the old Geneva Steel mill property where cleanup is about to transform a once blighted property into a bustling redevelopment.

The first-ever standard for selenium pollution for the Great Salt Lake is now set while a governor-appointed Great Salt Lake Advisory Council is looking at how to manage the lake for future generations.

The report is a Web-based document and available to the public at:

http://www.deq.utah.gov/envrpt/docs/Utah_Report_on_the_Environment_2008.pdf

Choose Clean Air ‘Red Light Green Light’ Program begins Saturday

October 30, 2008

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Public Information Officer

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – With the end of Indian summer just around the corner, the Utah Division of Air Quality (DAQ) is switching on its ‘Red Light Green Light’ program to alert people of winter air pollution conditions.

Starting Saturday, Nov. 1, DAQ’s three-day forecasts will track the hard-to-see particles caused primarily by vehicle emissions, wood burning stoves and fireplaces that can shroud the valley in pollution-trapping inversions.

“Winter is a great time to be outside. But it’s not pleasant when the valley is shrouded in pollution that obscure our world-class mountains,” said Cheryl Heying director of DAQ. “That’s why the Choose Clean Air program is crucial to inform residents when the air is unhealthy and help them make choices to prevent the pollution from getting worse.”

The program, now in its 16th season, is simple. DAQ monitors air pollution hourly and provides a three-day forecast on its Web site: <http://www.airquality.utah.gov/>. Under “green” conditions, wood burning is allowed. When pollution builds, “yellow” signals for voluntary no wood burning and efforts to limit driving. When pollution levels approach unhealthy, a “red” mandatory no burning is issued and the elderly, children or anyone with respiratory problems are advised to stay indoors.

With the number of storms last winter there were only 13 red days in Salt Lake and Davis counties, compared with 30 in the previous season even though tougher federal standards were in effect both winters.

“Obviously some inversions are difficult to avoid. It generally takes a stiff wind or storm to clear the pollution. But if we all work together and reduce air pollution emissions we may have fewer red days this winter,” said Bob Dalley, manager of the Air Monitoring Center.

Three State Radon Poster Contest Winners Announced

November 3, 2008

Contact:

Christine Keyser, (801) 536-0091 Radon Information Specialist

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – The Utah Department of Environmental Quality’s Division of Radiation Control today announced three state winners for the 2009 National Radon Poster Contest. First and second-place winners were selected from Centennial Middle School and third-place winner was from South Jordan Middle School.

Congratulations to first-place winner Emma Sorensen, second-place winner Taite Haynes, and third-place winner Courtney Morgan.

This year was a record breaking year for participation. Students from eight different schools, ages 9 – 14, rose to the challenge by creating 138 posters. Posters illustrated the dangers of radon, where it comes from, how it gets into our homes, and how residents can test their home for this invisible, radioactive gas.

The creative artwork, displayed at the Whitmore Library and the Department of Environmental Quality, was open to the public for voting from October 16th through 27th. Winning posters were selected on content accuracy, visual communication of a specific topic, poster reproducibility (with title/topic on the front) for possible publication, and originality.

The 2009 state winners and the first-place winner’s school will receive a cash award. The winning posters will be sent to Washington D. C. to be entered in the national contest. The national winner, a parent, and teacher will win an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., to participate in an awards ceremony, in January 2009.

“The poster contest is a great way to educate people about the dangers of radon, the second leading cause of lung cancer,” said John Hultquist, radon program manager with the Division of Radiation Control. “Testing for radon in homes and schools is the only way to find out if a radon problem exists.”

For more information about radon, please visit www.radon.utah.gov.

Utah Government and Firms Address Climate Change

Utah Joins Multi-State Effort to Track Greenhouse Gas Emissions

January 15, 2008

Contacts:

Dianne Nielson
Energy Adviser to Governor Huntsman
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Rick Sprott
Executive Director, Department of Environmental Quality
(801) 536-4404

Salt Lake City – Governor Jon Huntsman is pleased to announce today that five Utah businesses and two government entities have joined the state to be among the first to sign up for The Climate Registry, a multi-state initiative that tracks greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Kennecott Land, Kennecott Utah Copper, SWCA, ETC Group, USANA, Salt Lake City Corporation, Salt Lake County, and the State of Utah’s executive branch have become “Founding Reporters” for The Climate Registry (TCR), a non-profit organization established to measure and publicly report GHG emissions. TCR provides businesses an opportunity to get recognition for early reductions of greenhouse gases. It is a national registry and participation for Utah businesses and other entities is voluntary.

Here’s how it works: As business and government seek recognition for pollution reductions, TCR facilitates economic development and business certainty by providing an efficient state-based, nationally recognized registry. In many cases, reductions in GHG emissions are the result of improvements in energy efficiency and cost-saving operations. “Utah is proud to be among the first reporters to the Climate Registry,” Governor Huntsman said. “I applaud Utah businesses and local governments for voluntarily committing to measure and report their GHG emissions. This shows tremendous leadership in addressing the challenge of climate change.”

The tracking and reporting of GHG emissions compliments the state’s policy to improve energy efficiency, since those efficiency measures also result in reduced GHG emissions. Efficiency also benefits the bottom line through reduced energy costs. The Governor’s Blue Ribbon Advisory Council listed participation in The Climate Registry as one of its high-priority recommendations.

Jon M. Huntsman, Jr.

Governor
Gary R. Herbert
Lieutenant Governor
State of Utah
Office of the Governor
Salt Lake City, Utah
84114-2220

TCR was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in March 2007 in Washington, D.C. by 39 U.S. states, including Utah, five Canadian provinces, three Native American tribes, two Mexican states and the District of Columbia. It provides accurate accounting of GHG emissions and ensures consistency of measurement metrics across industry sectors and borders as well as providing certainty for businesses that make early reductions in GHG emissions. For more information, visit www.deq.utah.gov/Climate_Change.

Additional contacts:

USANA: Daniel A. Macuga Jr. (801) 954-7280
Kennecott Land and Kennecott Utah Copper: Kyle Bennett (801) 685-4543
SWCA: Cathryn Collis (801) 322-4307
ETC Group: Patti Case (801) 278-1927
Salt Lake City: Vicki Bennett (801) 535-6540
Salt Lake County: Jim Braden (801) 468-3333
Utah Administrative Services: Vicki Schoenfeld (801) 538-3215

Convert Your Vehicle to Compressed Natural Gas—SAFELY

May 22, 2008

Contacts:

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As gasoline and diesel prices continue to rise, many people are considering converting their car or light truck to run on compressed natural gas (CNG).

CNG is a clean, inexpensive (currently selling for less than half the cost of gasoline) domestic fuel. Best of all, it uses zero imported (or domestic) petroleum. And government rebates are available to help with the cost of conversion and to further lower the cost of CNG fuel.

But conversion from gasoline to CNG should not be done by unqualified technicians, using unapproved conversion kits or unsafe high-pressure gas cylinders. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has rules concerning the manufacture, sale and installation of alternative fuel engine conversion systems. The California Air Resources Board has similar and even more stringent emission rules for conversions in that state. Only EPA and/or CARB-certified conversion systems are permitted to be installed on vehicles. While a variety of non-certified systems are sold on the Internet and/or offered by some automotive shops, EPA has taken the position that installation of these systems is “tampering with a federally approved emission control system,” a federal violation punishable by a substantial financial penalty. Installation of non-certified systems can also cause a vehicle to fail emissions inspection. Because of the technical difficulty and the expense of EPA and CARB certification, certified conversions are only available for a limited number of engine families and applicable vehicle models. An up-to-date list of all currently available EPA- and CARB certified engine retrofit and repower systems is available at:

<http://www.ngvamerica.org/pdfs/marketplace/MP.Analyses.NGVs-a.pdf> .

New Honda Civic GX CNG vehicles, built in the USA, are also available in some states (see <http://automobiles.honda.com/civic-sedan/civic-gx.aspx>). Installation of an engine conversion package and fueling system may be done when the vehicle is first purchased or after it has been in service. EPA and CARB require that converters provide appropriate documentation and training to installers of their systems. Installation by non-qualified installers is illegal and could damage the retrofit equipment or the engine (or both), compromise vehicle performance, or render the vehicle unsafe to operate. No EPA- or CARB-certified engine conversion systems are sold to untrained/unapproved installers. CNG conversions SHOULD NOT be performed by unqualified technicians! Properly installed CNG systems are safe and economical, with the vehicle operating almost exactly like a gasoline vehicle. However CNG systems rely on high-pressure compressed natural gas for fuel, and high-pressure gases require specialized components and technical skills for installation. Conversions should be done according to the National Fire Protection Association’s *Vehicular Fuel Systems Code* (NFPA 52).

CNG converters and vehicle owners are reminded that CNG cylinders, often the most expensive component of the fuel system, must carry labels showing they meet the applicable Department of Transportation standard (FMVSS 304) by the symbol “DOT” on the label. The label will show an expiration date, after which the cylinder may not be safely used. Cylinders should also be inspected for safety every three years or 36,000 miles, whichever comes first (see <http://www.cleanvehicle.org/technology/cylinder.shtml> for more information). Converters and vehicle owners should have documentation that this safety inspection has been done.

Detailed answers to “Frequently Asked Questions about Converting Vehicles to Operate on Natural Gas” are available from NGVAmerica at http://www.ngvamerica.org/pdfs/FAQs_Converting_to_NGVs.pdf.

About NGV America—NGV America is the national trade association dedicated to the development of a growing and sustainable American market for vehicles powered by natural gas.

About the Clean Vehicle Education Foundation—CVEF coordinates and implements a variety of public awareness, education, market research, codes and standards and technology programs for natural gas vehicles.

Court Asked to Approve Kennecott Cleanup Agreement

April 17, 2008

Contact:

Dave Allison, (801) 5364479
Department of Environmental Quality

Salt Lake City, Utah – State and federal agencies are asking the Utah District Court to give its seal of approval on a groundwater cleanup agreement reached with Kennecott Utah Copper Corporation. DEQ, the Utah Attorney General's Office, the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Justice, sought public comment on the consent decree ending the last part of August, 2007. The parties have evaluated the comments and have responded to the comments in their motion asking the court to approve the Consent Decree.

For more information on the consent decree:
<http://www.deq.utah.gov/Issues/nrd/index.htm>

Additional Contacts:

DEQ: Doug Bacon, (801) 5364282
Utah AG: Fred Nelson, (801) 3660285
EPA: Rebecca Thomas (303) 3126552
DOJ: Jerry Ellington (303) 8441363

Drinking Water Director Given Distinguished Service Award

September 24, 2008

Contacts:

Ken Bousfield, (801) 5364207
Director, Division of Drinking Water
Alane Boyd, (801) 7121619
Executive Director, Intermountain Section AWWA

Salt Lake City, Utah – Ken Bousfield, director of the Division of Drinking Water, is the recipient of this year’s prestigious Charles W. Wilson Award for 35 years of distinguished service to the water industry. The Intermountain Water Works Association (AWWA) recently presented Bousfield with the award given to recognize an individual for 20 or more years of distinguished service that has provided exceptional leadership for the advancement of the water works industry.

“Ken has a deep commitment to safeguard public health and our quality of life by protecting and enhancing the environment,” said Alane Boyd, executive director of the Intermountain Section AWWA. “He has sought to strengthen the Division’s partnerships with the water industry and the individual water systems to ensure that the residents of Utah receive a safe and reliable supply of drinking water.”

Bousfield has worked for the Utah Department of Environmental Quality’s Division of Drinking Water for 32 years. On February 2007, Bousfield was appointed director, replacing Kevin Brown who left to join private industry. He is a licensed professional engineer who previously served as Compliance Section Manger for the Division of Drinking Water for 21 years. Bousfield also serves as chairman of the Security Committee for the National Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA). Beginning in 2009 Bousfield will serve on the Board of Directors of ASDWA.

Final Chance to Comment on Water Quality Changes

August 18, 2008

Contacts:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer

Salt Lake City, Utah – The public has one last chance to comment on changes to water quality standards, including a cap on selenium entering into the Great Salt Lake at a hearing held 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Department of Environmental Quality, 168 North 1950 West. Selenium, a naturally occurring mineral that can concentrate in water, can impact the reproductive success of shorebirds that nest on the Great Salt Lake. The issue has been the focus of a four year, \$2.3 million study to determine the first ever numeric standard for the Great Salt Lake.

A Science Panel, comprised of selenium experts, tested the eggs of mallard ducks, which although don't nest in the open waters were selected because they are the most sensitive to selenium than any other species. "In setting a standard, we wanted to take a protective approach," said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality and chair of the Great Salt Lake Water Quality Steering Committee. The Science Panel concluded that some of the eggs may not hatch if the selenium concentrations are between 6.4 and 16 parts per million (ppm). The current average concentration of selenium in bird eggs is 2.7 ppm. At a meeting in late May, the Great Salt Lake Water Quality Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of Kennecott Utah Copper, the brine shrimp industry, duck groups, environmental groups, state and federal regulators, sewer districts and others, recommended the Water Quality Board set a standard for selenium in the Great Salt Lake. If adopted it would become the nation's first tissue based selenium standard. The Board voted to seek public comment on a standard of 12.5 ppm, a concentration at which there is a probability that one egg in 10 won't hatch. A cap on the amount of selenium entering the lake was also recommended should concentrations reach a certain level. The Water Quality Board will take public comments to water quality standards until Aug. 20. For more information, visit: <http://www.waterquality.utah.gov/Rules/rulechange.htm>.

Finance Director to Head DEQ's Support Services

December 29, 2008

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer

Salt Lake City, Utah – Craig Silotti has been appointed director of Support Services to oversee the Utah Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) estimated \$51 million budget and other Department administrative services. Silotti, the finance director for nearly 13 years, will replace Steve Higley who retired in December. Higley served as the director of Support Services since DEQ became a Department 18 years ago.

Bill Sinclair, acting executive director of DEQ, made the announcement today.

“Craig has extensive financial experience. He will step into the Support Services director position in a seamless fashion.”

Silotti has been the finance director since February 1996. Prior to his employment with DEQ, he worked in the State Auditor’s Office for 11 years. “I’m looking forward to continuing to strengthen our relationships with our federal, state and local financial partners,” Silotti said.

Governor Huntsman Blocks Italian Waste

April 23, 2008

Contact:

Lisa Roskelley
Governor’s Spokeswoman
Office (801) 538-1503 Cell (801) 560-0137

Salt Lake City – Utah Governor Jon Huntsman decided Tuesday to direct Bill Sinclair, who represents Utah on the Northwest Interstate Low-Level Waste Compact, to vote against any proposals for foreign nuclear waste to come in to Utah. The issue is on the Compact’s May 8 agenda.

“As I have always emphatically declared, Utah should not be the world’s dumping ground,” Governor Huntsman said. “Our country has limited space to store even domestic waste and it would be most appropriate to have a federal policy against the importation of foreign nuclear waste. However, as the federal government is slow to adopt such a policy, Utah will lead the way.”

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has the authority to approve or disapprove the transport of foreign nuclear waste into the United States. Once allowed by the NRC, the Northwest Compact has the authority to approve or disapprove foreign nuclear waste for facilities in this region. The state impacted by the waste application has the ability to veto importation of foreign waste.

Governor Huntsman Tours Perry Weigh Station

Demonstration of PrePass-Weigh Station Bypass System

May 29, 2008

Contact:

Lisa Roskelley
Governor's Spokeswoman
Office (801) 538-1503 Cell (801) 560-0137

- WHO:** Governor Jon Huntsman
John Njord, Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT)
Rick Sprott, Utah Department of Environmental Quality
Lynn Blodgett, President of Affiliated Computer Services, Inc.
Richard Landis, President of HELP, Inc.
- WHAT:** Governor Huntsman will tour UDOT's Perry Weigh Station that has installed PrePass, an electronic system that verifies safety, credentials, and weight of commercial vehicles allowing them to 'bypass' stations at highway speeds to avoid idling and reduce air pollution.
- WHEN:** Friday, May 30, 2008 2 p.m.
PrePass demonstration for Governor
(1:15 p.m. media availability for background)
- WHERE:** Perry Weigh Station, Exit 362, I-15

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goal Announced Friday

June 19, 2008

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer, DEQ

Who: Rick Sprott, executive director of Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Dianne R. Nielson, energy adviser to Governor Huntsman

What: A press briefing to discuss Utah's greenhouse gas reduction goal intended to provide industry and state policymakers with a benchmark to guide future actions.

When: 8-9a.m., Friday, June 20
Room 201, DEQ Building #2, 168 North 1950 West.

How: Reporters can also contact them individually by calling:
Rick Sprott, (801) 5364403
Dianne R. Nielson (801) 5388802

Why: Governor Huntsman established the Blue Ribbon Advisory Council on Climate Change (BRAC) in October 2006 to address the impacts of climate change, while diversifying and securing Utah's energy future and sustaining our vibrant economy and quality of life. The BRAC report includes 72 alternatives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including a recommendation the state set a reduction goal. In May 2007, Utah joined the Western Climate Initiative and agreed to set a greenhouse reduction goal. Utah DEQ has engaged the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions to perform analyses of the BRAC options, including the reduction goal. More information about Utah's greenhouse gas reduction goal, visit: <http://www.deq.utah.gov>

Input Sought on Selenium Standard for Great Salt Lake

May 15, 2008

Contacts:

Walt Baker, (801) 5386081
Director, Division of Water Quality
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer, DEQ

Salt Lake City, Utah – After a four year effort, the Great Salt Lake Selenium Steering Committee will present a summary of the work on a selenium standard for the Great Salt Lake at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, May 20 in Room 101 at the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), 168 N. 1950 West. The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. with an open house.

The Steering Committee comprised of industry, government, and environmental groups, began work in 2004 on developing a site specific numeric water quality standard for selenium for the open water of the Great Salt Lake. A proposal to discharge selenium into the Jordan River as part of a groundwater cleanup project prompted DEQ to initiate the process of establishing a selenium threshold that would protect the lake's unique ecology

while providing industry and others the continued economic benefit of the lake. Selenium is a naturally occurring mineral that in large doses can be toxic to wildlife. “This is truly a groundbreaking project,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This will be the first numeric water quality standard for the Great Salt Lake and if adopted, the first tissue based water quality standard in Utah.”

Throughout the process, the Steering Committee relied heavily on a Science Panel and its contractors that included world experts in environmental regulation, toxicity, bioaccumulation, environmental chemistry and avian biology. The engineering firm of CH2M Hill was hired to manage the \$2.3 million project.

Following the May 20th meeting, the Great Salt Lake Selenium Steering Committee will review comments and develop a formal recommendation to the Water Quality Board for a numeric selenium standard that is protective of the designated beneficial uses of the Great Salt Lake. More information can be found on the Web:

http://www.deq.utah.gov/Issues/GSL_WQSC/index.htm

Murray and St. George Schools Kick Off Bus Retrofit Projects

December 15, 2008

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer

WHAT: Murray School District and Washington County School District, are among the first districts in the state to begin the process of retrofitting diesel powered school buses with pollution control devices with grants provided by community, state and federal partners to help improve air quality.

WHEN: 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2008
Photo opportunity available of bus retrofits in action.

WHERE: Horizon Elementary School, 5180 S. 700 West (Glendon Street), Murray
Washington County School District bus garage, 855 E. Brigham Road, St. George

WHO: Salt Lake County:
Bill Sinclair, acting executive director, Utah Department of Environmental Quality
Murrell Martin, Utah State Office of Education
Cummins Rocky Mountain, retrofit vendor
Washington County:

Dave Heaton, Southwest District Health Department
Instrument Sales and Service, retrofit vendor

WHY: About 22 school districts have applied for grants that total an anticipated \$2.39 million to begin installing a diesel oxidation catalyst and closed crankcase ventilation systems, intended to reduce tailpipe emissions that capture pollutants. This event kicks off the installation of such devices from the approved vendors.

Neighborhood Fireworks Contribute to Poor Air Quality

July 2, 2007

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer, DEQ

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – Before you light those sparklers, think about this: fireworks pollute the air. The Utah Division of Air Quality (DAQ) wants to remind Utahns that fireworks not only pose a danger to wildland fires but pump fine particle pollution in the air, that may prompt an unhealthy spike in air pollution that make it difficult for some people to breathe.

“Traditionally, the air monitors record high concentrations of fine particulate pollution associated with fireworks displays after the Fourth of July and Pioneer Day,” said Cheryl Heying, air quality director. “Those most impacted by the unhealthy air pollution are young children, older adults, pregnant women and people with respiratory problems.” The fires in northern California are impacting Utah, Heying said. The dry, hot weather also has contributed to higher levels of air pollution caused, in some cases, smoke from fires.

Last year on July 4, air monitor stations recorded levels that exceeded the federal health standard for fine particle pollution known as PM 2.5. Most notably, the high levels were recorded in areas surrounding smaller gatherings of neighborhoods or families igniting their own fireworks rather than watching a large professional display.

Short term exposures to the particle pollution can aggravate asthma attacks and lung disease. In people with heart disease, short term exposures have been linked to heart attacks and arrhythmias. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.airquality.utah.gov/fireworks.htm>.

Utah Prepared to Meet Tougher Federal Ozone Rules

March 12, 2008

Contacts:

Cheryl Heying, (801) 5364015
Director, Division of Air Quality
Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 5364484
Public Information Officer, DEQ

Salt Lake City, Utah – Ongoing actions by Utah environmental regulators, industry, and the public are more critical than ever to meet the new tougher ozone levels announced today by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Already, air quality officials have been working with school districts to retrofit school buses with cleaner technology to reduce air pollution. And state office buildings have begun making strides to put in place more energy efficient policies and practices to fight air pollution. But other options will be explored. “We may be looking at tightening regulations for gasoline stations, among other alternatives,” said Cheryl Heying, director of the Utah Division of Air Quality. “We have been expecting a new, tougher ozone standard and will ensure all areas meet the standard as soon as possible.” The EPA today said the allowable amount of ozone – or smog – in the air be reduced from 80 parts per billion to 75 parts per billion. That means the Utah counties impacted are: Salt Lake, Davis, Weber, Utah, Box Elder and Tooele. Governor Jon Huntsman has made improvements to air quality one of his top priorities. The 2008 Legislature appropriated over \$2 million in ongoing General Fund money to help meet tougher federal air quality regulations.

The new EPA standard reflects a growing view among scientists that less pollution than previously thought can impact health. Ozone is a mix of chemicals emitted mainly from vehicle emissions and industrial sources. It becomes more troublesome on hot summer days that can make it difficult for people to breathe. Studies also have linked increased ozone levels with respiratory illnesses and lung inflammation.

New Workgroup Focuses on Carbon Capture Regs

September 3, 2008

Contact:

Rusty Lundberg, (801) 5386765
Chair, Steering Committee of the Carbon Capture and Geologic Sequestration
Workgroup (CCGS)

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has created the Carbon Capture and Geologic Sequestration Workgroup that will develop state regulations governing ways to capture carbon dioxide from coal fired power plants. Carbon Capture and Geologic Sequestration (CCGS) is an approach for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions by capturing carbon dioxide from large stationary sources such as coal fired power plants and storing it in deep rock formations instead of releasing it to the atmosphere.

The first meeting of the CCGS Workgroup is scheduled at 9 a.m. Monday, September 8 in Room 101 at DEQ, 168 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City.

The 2008 Legislature passed Senate Bill 202 that amended the Utah Energy Resource Procurement Act requiring the Division of Water Quality and the Division of Air Quality, in collaboration with the Public Service Commission, the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, and the Utah Geological Survey to develop rules for the capture, transportation, and geologic sequestration of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

“There will be a concerted effort among all the agencies involved to develop these rules and prepare comments on the Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed rule regulating underground carbon sequestration,” said Candace Cady, a Water Quality scientist who will chair the CO₂ Injection Well Subcommittee of the CCGS Workgroup. “The proposed EPA rule only addresses federal requirements for the injection wells; it does not address requirements for the capture of carbon dioxide at its source or its transportation to the injection well.”

The CCGS Workgroup is comprised of local government, state and federal regulators, land managers, attorneys, state and national environmental groups, public health officials as well as power generators and those from the oil and gas industry. The Workgroup consists of a steering committee, three subcommittees, an advisory committee and a stakeholder group, all of which will provide input in the rules development process. For more information, visit:

<http://www.climatechange.utah.gov/>

Schools Eligible for Funds to Retrofit Busses

July 31, 2008

Contact:

Cheryl Heying, (801) 5364015
Director, Division of Air Quality

Salt Lake City, Utah – School districts across the state are eligible to receive funding to retrofit diesel powered school buses with pollution control devices – a deal made possible through a partnership between community groups, agencies, and the Utah Division of Air Quality (DAQ).

Armed with an anticipated \$2.3 million in grants, DAQ will offer school districts the chance to apply for funding to install cleaner technology on school buses built between 1993 and 2006. “Thanks to the partnership efforts we’ve been able to secure the funding to begin the process of retrofitting school buses likely to begin in early 2009,” said Cheryl Heying, director of DAQ.

The funding includes \$400,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant, about \$96,000 from DAQ, and \$100,000 provided by the 2008 Legislature. It also includes \$750,000 each from Salt Lake and Utah counties. The money will be spent to purchase the recommended technology – diesel oxidation catalyst and closed crankcase ventilation systems – intended to reduce tailpipe emissions that capture pollutants. The devices are about \$2,000 per bus, including the cost of installation performed by the vendor. “Not only does the outside air receive the benefit of reduced pollutants, but the air children breathe on the bus will be cleaner as well,” Heying said.

The partners include: Department of Environmental Quality’s Division of Air Quality, Utah State Office of Education, Salt Lake County’s mayor’s office, EPA, Utah Clean Cities, Utah Department of Transportation, Wasatch Front Regional Council, Mountainland Association of Governments, Utah Moms for Clean Air, Wasatch Clean Air Coalition, and Utah County.

For more information, contact Mat Carlile at 536-4136 or Stacey Adams at 536-4482.

Environmental Director Rick Sprott to Retire

November, 10, 2008

Contact:

Rick Sprott, (801) 536-4404,
Executive Director, DEQ

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – Rick Sprott, executive director of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), announced today that he plans to retire effectively on Dec. 5. to spend more time with his family.

Deputy Director Bill Sinclair will serve as the interim executive director until a permanent replacement is announced by Governor Huntsman.

In June 2007, Huntsman appointed Sprott as executive director of DEQ to replace Dianne Nielson who became the Governor's energy advisor. Sprott, a former air quality director, has been with DEQ for 14 years following a career in the Air Force.

“I had initially planned to retire before being appointed director at DEQ,” said Sprott. “I have appreciated the leadership the Governor has shown for environmental issues and the support the Legislature has given to fund critical programs such as air quality and others. But my family has relocated to New Mexico and I am anxious to join them.”

In addition, Sprott thanked businesses, environmental groups, and local health departments for their collaborative spirit to solve problems. “This is what really sets us apart from other states,” he added.

Sprott, 62, said he leaves behind a strong leadership team within DEQ, all of whom are dedicated and committed to protecting public health and the environment.

“DEQ employees are incredibly dedicated and talented individuals. I am fully confident that this agency will continue to improve the quality of life in Utah,” he said. “I don't expect DEQ to skip a beat.”

Two State Geologists Honored for Water Quality Work

March 31, 2008

Contacts:

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Utah Geological Survey, DNR

Salt Lake City, Utah – Mike Lowe and Janae Wallace of the Utah Geological Survey (UGS) within the Department of Natural Resources, are the recipients of the prestigious 2008 Calvin K. Sudweeks Water Quality Award for their work to protect aquifers across the state. The Division of Water Quality nominated Lowe and Wallace for their 12 year long effort to protect ground water quality in the state. The award will be presented at the Water Environment Association’s annual meeting in St. George on April 2. “Specifically, Mike and Janae have been responsible for the preparation and submittal of several ‘Groundwater Aquifer Classification’ petitions, approved by the Water Quality Board, that will help identify and protect the groundwater quality of aquifers throughout the state,” said Walt Baker, director of DWQ. “Aquifer classifications serve as a valuable planning tool for counties and towns to protect groundwater resources.”

Every year the Water Quality Board recognizes an individual or, in this case, individuals, who have shown outstanding leadership in the water quality field. The award is named for a former state water quality director who was instrumental in leading Utah through dramatic changes in water quality, including improved means of wastewater treatment and the development of protective standards.

Since 1989, Lowe has worked with the UGS identifying geologic hazard and conducting groundwater investigations. He is currently the manager for the Groundwater and Paleontology program. He lives in West Valley. Wallace, a Salt Lake City resident, has worked in the Groundwater and Paleontology Program of UGS since 1996. She is a certified onsite system professional and a groundwater and soil sampler. She is the scholarship chair for the Salt Lake Chapter’s Association of Women Geoscientists.

Utah Students Invited to Enter 2009 National Radon Poster Contest

September 24, 2008

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Students, Parents, and Teachers Can Win Washington, D.C. Trip

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – Utah students have an opportunity to be creative when it comes to spotlighting the dangers of indoor radon, an invisible and odorless radioactive gas, by entering a poster in a national contest that could win them a trip to Washington, D.C. The National Safety Council, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is once again sponsoring a Radon Poster Contest for children ages 9-14 enrolled in a public, private, territorial, tribal, Department of Defense or home school. Members of a sponsoring club, such as a scouting organization, 4H, or art, computer, and science clubs are eligible. There is no entry fee, and only one entry per student is allowed. The entry deadline is October 15, 2008.

Poster topics must include one of the following themes:

What is radon?
Where does radon come from?
How does radon get inside our homes?
Radon can cause lung cancer!
Test your home for radon!

Statewide winners and runners-up will be entered in the national contest. The winning posters will be unveiled at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. during National Radon Awareness Month, January 2009, and will be reproduced and distributed nationally. Last year, Aly Wells (age 14) from Farmington Junior High received the state's first place award. The national winner, a parent, and teacher (or sponsoring organization's representative) will receive an all expense paid trip to D.C. to participate in the ceremony.

In addition, Utah contest participants may be eligible for a cash award. The state's first place winner will receive \$300, with \$500 awarded to his or her school or organization. Second and third place winners will be awarded \$100 each. "Radon is the second leading

cause of lung cancer, second only to smoking,” said John Hultquist, Radon Program manager with the Division of Radiation Control. “Testing the air you breathe in homes and schools is the best method to determine your risk from radon.”

To find out how to enter the Poster Contest, visit, www.nsc.org/issues/radon. For more information about radon, see www.radon.utah.gov or www.epa.gov/radon.

Utah Supports Regional Cap-and-Trade Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

September 23, 2008

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Executive Director, DEQ

Salt Lake City, Utah – The State of Utah joins other Western states and Canadian provinces in unveiling a plan today for a market-based cap-and-trade program as a major tool to meet a regional goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

“Today’s plan is just the beginning of extensive discussions that will continue with our Legislature and stakeholders to ensure the design works for Utah. We will also continue to review economic analyses to ensure the recommendations provide cost-effective results,” Dianne Nielson, energy adviser for Governor Huntsman, said. “The Western Climate Initiative gives Utah a critical seat at the table to communicate our need for all energy resources and maintaining our state’s coal powered viability in a changing regional market.”

The Western Climate Initiative (WCI), which includes Utah, has developed a multi-phased strategy that caps emissions from major sources that emit greenhouse gases while providing flexibility and economic benefits intended to spur continuous innovation of clean technologies.

“This market-based approach can help achieve the reductions that are needed to meet Utah’s goal of reducing our emissions to 2005 levels by 2020,” said Rick Sprott, executive director of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality. “Utah can provide leadership in the West and nationally in meeting these goals and increasing our energy efficiency.”

Utah joined WCI in 2007, shortly after it was launched by the Governors of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington to address climate change. The initiative expanded to include the state of Montana and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. Thirteen other US States, Canadian provinces, and Mexican States are official Observers in the WCI. For more information, visit <http://www.climatechange.utah.gov/>

Utahns Given Opportunity to Comment on Nevada Power Plant

February 15, 2008

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Public Information Officer, DEQ

Salt Lake City, Utah – Utahns will have their chance to comment on a proposed coal fired power plant just across the border in Nevada. The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has announced it will host a public meeting in St. George on Feb. 27 to gather comments on the Toquop Energy Project, a \$1.3 billion, 750 megawatt power plant proposed near Mesquite. The comments will be forwarded to Nevada’s Division of Environmental Protection, which is reviewing the application for an operating permit.

The meeting will run from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Dixie State College’s Dunford Auditorium, located in the Browning Building at 225 South 700 East.

“Although the state does not have jurisdiction over the plant, we want to give Utahns an opportunity to comment on a neighboring project that could impact us,” said Cheryl Heying, director of the Division of Air Quality.

Rick Sprott, executive director of DEQ, will make introductory remarks. The meeting will be recorded and all comments submitted to the state of Nevada, which has extended its public comment period until March 7.

Comments also may be directed by mail to Rod A. Moore, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Air Pollution Control, 901 South Steward St., Suite 4001, Carson City, Nev., 89701 or by fax (775) 6876396.

States, Provinces Taking Action to Curb Climate Change

Western Climate Initiative Releases Draft Recommendations for Program to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Friday, May 16, 2008

Contact:

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Today, Western Climate Initiative (WCI) Partners released their consolidated draft recommendations for the design of a joint system to reduce climate changing greenhouse gases, and meet their regional goal to roll back those emissions 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020.

The Partners' draft recommendations call for a regional cap and trade program, in addition to the regulations, incentive programs, fee and tax programs, and voluntary programs currently under way or planned in the region. Under a cap and trade program, a cap is set to ratchet down greenhouse gases (GHG). Emitters then cut their pollution to meet the cap. To ensure maximum emission reductions at least cost, emitters that can't feasibly or cost effectively reduce their pollution may purchase credits from emitters that have reduced pollution beyond the required amount, as long as the cap is not exceeded. WCI Partners are focusing on developing a regional program that builds on the strength of consistent local approaches, while understanding that each partner must have flexibility to implement the program in a way that addresses their jurisdiction's unique characteristics. Partners also want the program to promote clean and renewable energy in the region, stimulate economic investment and new jobs, and reward innovations. The draft recommendations encompass the work done to date by five WCI subcommittees. The consolidated document released today includes some revised recommendations including:

Further defining what emitters should be included in the cap and trade program.
Further defining how offsets reductions taken by entities outside the cap and trade program should be recognized by the program.

Significant work remains for the WCI, including identifying the point of regulation for electricity producers and specifying how emission allowances will be distributed. The draft of the consolidated recommendations is available for review at www.westernclimateinitiative.org. Comments can be submitted via the website through June 6, 2008.

WCI will hold a stakeholder workshop May 21 in Salt Lake City. Those who can't attend in person can participate via an online webinar. The registration link for the workshop and the webinar is <http://www.regonline.com/Checkin.asp?EventId=608730>.

Work on the regional cap and trade program began in February 2007. At that time, the governors of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington created WCI with a longterm commitment to significantly reduce regional GHG, thus lowering the risk of dangerous threats to the climate. Science suggests that this will require worldwide reductions between 50 and 85 percent in carbon dioxide emissions from current levels by 2050.

As part of this commitment, in August 2007 WCI Partners established their regional GHG emissions reduction goal. They also agreed to complete the first phase of work on the multisector market based mechanism by the late summer 2008 to help reach the goal. Each Partner is also participating in The Climate Registry, a multi state GHG emissions registry.

The regional goal reflects the combined impact of emissions reduction goals set by each WCI Partner. It does not replace Partners' individual goals. Since WCI first formed, the states of Utah and Montana and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec have joined. Observers of WCI's work include the states of Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Nevada, and Wyoming, the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan, and the Mexican border states of Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Sonora, and Tamaulipas.