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### **Climate Solutions: Practical Solutions To Global Warming**

The goal of this assignment was to gain a comprehensive understanding of local organizations and their efforts to confront climate change. We as a team selected Climate Solutions; an Olympia based non-profit organization trying to make an impact on the environment, also providing solutions, for our organization to look further into. We called Beth Doglio (Campaign Director at Climate Solutions) to interview her about the company in order to gain a more in depth understanding than what their website had to offer. She explained to us how they work with lobbyists to try and enact new policies in the Northwest, conduct research about climate change, and some of the projects they've had success with.

Climate Solutions was originally founded in 1998 in Olympia by two small organizations, the Atmosphere Alliance and the Energy Outreach Center, combining together and joining forces. The organizations goals are focused on finding creative and unique methods for combating climate change on both a small and large scale. They currently work primarily in Washington and Oregon; however they also work in Montana and Idaho as well. They are primarily funded by donations either from individuals or other foundations, and Climate Solutions does receive a small amount of money from the government.

In Washington's Pierce County, Climate Solutions devoted its efforts to reduce more than \$1.3 million in 2010 and 2011 by reducing its consumption of energy, water, fuel, and office supplies according to the second annual sustainability index. Some highlights from the report state that energy use was reduced by 12.4% and saving \$941,839 in energy since January 1<sup>st</sup>

2010, recycling has also increased by 40% around Pierce County buildings, which surpasses their 2015 goal of a 35% recycling rate. The county also purchased more electric and hybrid vehicles which now make up 22.5% of the County's fleet.

Climate Solutions is also involved in getting one of the world's largest wind farms up and is actually running in Northeastern Oregon. Shepherds Flat is a \$2 billion dollar wind farm that produces 845 megawatts of clean and renewable energy. It stretches across two counties in the northern part of Oregon and is already generating power that will be sold to Southern California Edison. This type of project is a great example of how Oregon can develop its economy towards green energy, which will also create new jobs in the field. This is also a great example for other states and countries to look at in developing efficient and green energy in helping our planet combating climate change.

Besides more localized objectives Climate Solution is also focusing on cutting atmospheric carbon levels, which is quickly becoming an alarming topic as it is the main cause of global warming. In order to make an impact, Climate Solutions is working with the Northwest Biocarbon Initiative (NBI) which is designed to push the Northwest as being the nation's leading laboratory and incubator for biocarbon solutions. NBI's purpose is to develop new ways of storing carbon in forests, farms and communities. Some of the biocarbon solutions are; forest management, agriculture and rangeland strategies, community development, and public engagement strategies etc.<sup>1</sup>

Sustainable aviation fuel is another project that Climate Solutions are working on. This project consists of creating advanced biofuels that will be as effective as the carbon based fuels

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<sup>1</sup>Northwest Biocarbon Initiative, [http://climatesolutions.org/programs/NBI/nbi\\_onepager](http://climatesolutions.org/programs/NBI/nbi_onepager)

currently in use now. Proven to reduce emissions by up to 50% and has been approved for use in commercial flights and, it will also be a key driver in the creation of jobs and leading the way towards cleaner burning fuels across the world. While this project originated in the Northwest, Climate Solutions has been contacted by other companies throughout the nation and world to work towards promoting sustainable aviation fuels. Those countries include Brazil, Chile, Scandinavia, and parts of Asia. Since 2011 the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Northwest (SAFN) has been working to help facilitate this project. Climate Solutions is specifically working on processing plants, feedstock's to federal investment, and are working hard to develop a more sustainable biofuel and to continue improving what they have already done.

Another area that Climate Solutions focuses on is the creation and implementation of government policies regarding climate change. The largest area that they are focusing on is carbon emissions since it is currently the largest cause of global warming. During our interview Beth Doglio brought up a couple of policies Climate Solutions would like to see enacted. Mainly, those strategies regard the reduction of carbon emissions such as; a carbon tax, or introducing a cap and trade system. Climate Solutions sees reducing our carbon output as the first step to take towards fighting climate change. While they are similar to lobbyists in some forms Climate Solutions isn't an environmental lobbyist firm, instead choosing to hire an outside firm to do their lobbying for them.

On top of fighting for policy changes Climate Solutions also conducts research about climate change and the environment. They put out reports on topics that they have researched and studied extensively in fields that are directly relevant to what they are doing, such as creating a smart grid, sustainable biofuels, and creating a carbon free life style in Washington and Oregon. These reports are all accessible through their website.

Climate Solutions is also working towards bringing others together over climate change issues. They organize small conferences in which they bring in businesses and share ideas for helping the environment.

In conclusion, as a team we enjoyed working together and learning about local initiatives and, what they are doing towards improving climate change. We both learned more about the types of energy that are available now as well as the ones that are currently being developed for the future. It was also interesting to learn about how Climate Solutions has evolved during the last decade and a half, starting as a small six person operation to a larger organization that has been approached by foreign countries. Climate Solutions' dedication in making progress has clearly paid off and as a result it made significant progress in creating the world's largest wind farm in Oregon, including their remarkable effort in recycling. This can truly be an example that other states and nations should be looking at in making progress to overcome climate change.

**References:**

"Northwest Biocarbon Initiative." *Climate Solutions: Practical Solutions To Global Warming*.

Web. 11 Feb. 2013.