

Climate Smart Communities Profile



Albany County

March 2014

Program Overview

The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program is a New York State initiative to help local communities reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, prepare for effects of climate change and save taxpayers money. The program is designed to address 10 focus areas, or “pledge elements,” outlined in the CSC Pledge: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/53013.html>.

New York State is offering technical support to communities that have adopted the CSC Pledge. This profile provides a stepping stone for identifying a technical support service package to help Albany County progress through the 10 pledge elements (see below).

Detailed information on actions completed, in progress, and identified for future action is provided in the tables on the following pages. If a table is missing for a particular pledge element, it means that the CSC program does not have a record of actions taken to address that element.

Local Government Facts:

Adopted Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Pledge: 2009

CSC Pledge Elements Addressed: 9 out of 10

Total Actions Completed: 15

Government Type: County

County: Albany County

Region: Capital District

Population: 304,204

Climate Smart Communities Pledge Elements:

- 1. Pledge to Combat Climate Change by Becoming a Climate Smart Community*
- 2. Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Move to Action*
- 3. Decrease Energy Demand for Local Government Operations*
- 4. Encourage Renewable Energy for Local Government Operations*
- 5. Realize Benefits of Recycling and Other Climate Smart Solid Waste Management Practices*
- 6. Promote Climate Protection Through Community Land Use Tools*
- 7. Plan for Adaptation to Unavoidable Climate Change*
- 8. Support a Green Innovation Economy*
- 9. Inform and Inspire the Public*
- 10. Commit to an Evolving Process*

Pledge Element 1: Pledge to Combat Climate Change by Becoming a Climate Smart Community

Action	Status	Description
Adopted CSC Pledge	Completed	Albany County adopted the Climate Smart Communities Pledge in 2009.
Formed an Internal Energy Group	Completed	Albany County formed an internal energy group that includes the Commissioner of Management and Budget, Commissioner of General Services, and the Executive Director of the Sewer District. The group is focused on routine operations and conducts a capital project review.
Create a Green Team	Completed	The County created an internal Green Team that gets together once a month to discuss energy efficiency measures in County operations.

Pledge Element 2: Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Move to Action

Action	Status	Description
Adopted the State Electricity Reduction Goal	Completed	Albany County has adopted the New York State electricity reduction goal of reducing electricity use 15 percent by 2015.

Pledge Element 3: Decrease Energy Demand for Local Government Operations

Action	Status	Description
Implement a paperless legislation system	Completed	In 2013, the County implemented a paperless legislation system called CALM: County of Albany Legislative Management System. They are hoping to make all legislative matters electronic, including scoping out a tablet system for all county legislators.
Implement sewer district upgrades	Completed	The following improvements were made at the Sewer District: 1. Cogeneration – At the Sewer District’s North Plant a cogeneration facility (waste to heat turbo energy generator) has been installed and will run on dehydrated sludge. It will provide between 50-75% of the facilities energy needs. 2. Gray water – All graywater is pumped across the Hudson river to commercial use. 3. Disinfection – Both plants will have UV Ray disinfection systems in the near future, as mandated by NYS DEC
Completed an Energy Audit	Completed	The County worked with NYSERDA to complete an energy audit of their operations in 2011.
Recycling in County Offices	Completed	All County buildings have recycling receptacles to collect tin, glass, and paper. All staff members have a bin at their desk. The County has been able to find a vendor who will pay them \$2 a pound for their recycling.
'Commuter Choices' Program	Completed	The Albany County "Commuter Choices" program offers employees a parking spot or discounted bus fares.

Pledge Element 3: Decrease Energy Demand for Local Government Operations

Action	Status	Description
Energy Efficiency Upgrades	In progress	Albany County completed energy efficiency upgrades at a municipal building at 112 State Street. In 2014, they County is planning on upgrading the HVAC at the Family Court Building, the cooling system at the Hockey Facility, the plumbing and HVAC at the Mercantile Building, the boiler and water tank at Times Union Center.
Upgrades to the TU Center	In progress	The County is working with NYPA on upgrades to the Times Union (TU) Center. Some of the work being considered includes: HVAC upgrade and an energy management system. The County is investigating a Green Bond to fund these improvements.

Pledge Element 4: Encourage Renewable Energy for Local Government Operations

Action	Status	Description
Install Solar Panels	Identified	The County would like to expand the use of solar at the Public Works facility and on the hockey facility.
Create a Public Benefit Corporation	Identified	The County is considering creating a public benefit corporation for solar. They are looking at the model that Cayuga County implemented.
Solar Panels on Hockey Facility	Completed	Albany County completed a solar installation on the hockey facility.

Pledge Element 5: Realize Benefits of Recycling and Other Climate Smart Solid Waste Management Practices

Action	Status	Description
Ban the Use of Polystyrene Foam Containers	Completed	In 2013, the County implemented the Food Service Waste Reduction Action which bans the use of polystyrene foam disposable food service ware and requires the use of biodegradable or compostable food service ware by chain food establishments in Albany County.

Pledge Element 6: Promote Climate Protection Through Community Land Use Tools

Action	Status	Description
Agricultural Protection Plan and Program	Completed	The Albany County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan includes goals and strategies to support and enhance Albany County's agricultural industry and agricultural resources. The County coordinates tax foreclosure property amongst the communities in Albany County to keep agricultural land in current use, preserve buildings, and redevelop properties.

Pledge Element 7: Plan for Adaptation to Unavoidable Climate Change

Action	Status	Description
Updating Emergency Management Plan and Program	Completed	The County updated their Emergency Management Plan and entire program. They are working closely with the Department of Health and other departments to ensure continuity of operations in the event of a disaster. They are also conducting table top exercises to ensure people are prepared.

Pledge Element 8: Support a Green Innovation Economy

Action	Status	Description
Sustainability Included in the Economic Development Plan	Identified	Economic Development efforts are being ramped up by the County. They are exploring how to incorporate sustainability measures and green innovation opportunities. Internal restructuring has slowed these efforts somewhat.

Pledge Element 9: Inform and Inspire the Public

Action	Status	Description
Live Life Local Festival	Completed	In 2013, the County sponsored a free festival that focused on locally made and produced products. Live Life Local provided an opportunity for residents from the Capital District to taste and purchase products from vendors who represent the diversity that Albany County has to offer in the areas of food and the arts.
Sustainability Outreach Website	In progress	Albany County is creating a new website that will communicate its sustainability efforts.

Pledge Element 10: Commit to an Evolving Process

Action	Status	Description
Stormwater Coalition of Albany County	Completed	The County created a Stormwater Coalition in 2012 to provide education and outreach and coordinate stormwater projects throughout the County. The following entities are members of the Coalition: Member List: City of Albany, Town of Bethlehem, City of Cohoes, Town of Colonie, Village of Colonie, Village of Green Island, Village of Voorheesville, Town of Guilderland, Village of Menands, Town of New Scotland, City of Watervliet, Albany County, University at Albany – SUNY Uptown Campus.

For more information about the Albany County’s climate protection efforts, please contact: Mike McLaughlin at (518) 447-7040



The Climate Smart Communities Program is jointly sponsored by six New York State Agencies: the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Department of State, Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Health, Department of Transportation, and Public Service Commission.