

YOUR

CAP TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

HAVE THEY BEEN USED EFFECTIVELY?



In 2006, Boulder voters were the first in the country to tax their own energy use in order to raise money for programs that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Since it was passed, this Climate Action Plan (CAP) tax has provided between \$600,000 and \$1.8 million a year to fund energy efficiency and conservation programs for homes and businesses. Voters may be asked in November 2012 if they'd like to renew the tax, which expires in March 2013.

To gauge the effectiveness of the CAP tax, the City of Boulder hired Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) to conduct an independent analysis of CAP programs. The full report is available at BoulderEnergyFuture.com. This handout provides an at-a-glance look at this report and its conclusions.



In short, RMI found that the city has used your CAP tax dollars to invest in programs that are reducing emissions at a reasonable cost.

The consultants urge continued support and funding for these programs and encourage the community to make even more substantial efficiency improvements to address the climate change challenge.

KEY FINDINGS

Boulder has attained impressive energy savings and emission reductions, and is well positioned to achieve future emissions reduction targets.

▶ While the city will not reach its Kyoto Protocol carbon emissions reduction goal this year, something the city has known and informed the community about previously, Boulder has generated significant carbon savings at a reasonable cost.

▶ Lighting replacement programs, especially in the residential sector, offered the most cost effective savings.

▶ Renewables programs in Boulder, such as the Solar Grant Program, have

been far more cost effective than city-run programs in other states.

▶ EnergySmart programs are showing impressive results in helping people put energy efficiency recommendations into action. While they have had significant, and anticipated, start-up costs, these programs are expected to gain in cost effectiveness, providing greater emissions reductions per dollar invested.

ARE THERE WAYS THE CITY COULD DO EVEN BETTER?

Yes. The report contained several recommendations:

Boulder must push beyond the simple and easy programs and begin additionally encouraging residents and businesses to think long term about their buildings, investment choices and energy use.

The interaction between where our energy comes from (specifically, increasing renewable sources) and how we use it is important and should continue to be a focus if the community wants to hit future emissions-reduction targets.



City staff are holding a community climate workshop on June 13 and will make an additional presentation to City Council at a study session on July 24.

The city can and should improve its methods of tracking data and assessing the performance of its programs.

These improvements include investing in a comprehensive program database, determining yearly and lifecycle emission reductions, clearly defining which programs are funded by CAP tax dollars and which benefit from other sources of revenue, and developing a better system of citywide carbon accounting.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The city is working with interested community members and a consulting firm called the Brendle Group to identify a set of programs and strategies that would be most effective in terms of reducing emissions and using available resources wisely as climate action in Boulder continues.

A possible ballot item may ask voters to renew the Climate Action Plan tax, as it is currently structured, on Election Day, Nov. 6, 2012.

WHAT WENT INTO THIS ANALYSIS?

RMI studied 19 residential, commercial and renewable energy programs (such as lighting retrofits, EnergySmart, and 10 for Change) that have been wholly or

partially funded with the CAP tax. The consultants determined the amount of emissions each program can be expected to save throughout the lifecycle of any installed equipment or upgrades, and conducted a cost/benefit analysis based on the tax dollars that were used to create and support the program.

While the city has conducted a yearly accounting of the money it has spent, this is the first analysis that takes into account the cumulative value of energy efficiency efforts. The idea is that an efficiency improvement, such as changing an incandescent bulb to a CFL, saves energy and money for more than just the first year. After calculating the CAP tax-funded programs' costs and savings over time, RMI compared the city's programs to similar efforts in other municipalities.

WHO IS RMI?

Rocky Mountain Institute was co-founded by leading environmentalist Amory Lovins in 1982. The Colorado-based, independent non-profit is committed to collaborating with businesses, government and communities to drive the efficient and restorative use of resources using profitable and innovative approaches. RMI works in the four energy-using sectors of the economy:

buildings, industry, transportation, and electricity, and leverages whole-system thinking to reveal interconnections and systemic solutions, which are often simpler, cheaper and able to solve multiple problems with single investments. RMI adheres to a set of guiding principles, including one called the "end-use/least-cost" approach; "What are we trying to do, and what's the best and cheapest way to do it?"

