



Environmental Center

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CU Students End REC Purchases, Switch to Local Offsets

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The University of Colorado at Boulder student government has become the first customer of Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter's forthcoming "Colorado Carbon Fund," itself the nation's first "local offsets" broker.

"What this means is we are shifting about \$50,000 student dollars to support Colorado projects that fight climate change while increasing economic prosperity, assisting local communities and creating service learning opportunities for students," said student government president Hadley Brown. "We want to focus our efforts to fight climate change on tangible opportunities in our own backyards and Gov. Ritter's new program gives us that option."

Colorado students in 2000 were the nation's first to buy wind energy credits (RECS) in 2000, and in ending that practice have become the nation's first campus to switch to all local offsets to mitigate campus carbon emissions.

The Governor's Energy Office will administer the CCF program, which is designed to mitigate climate change through renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in Colorado.

The announcement, by CU-Boulder Chancellor G.P. "Bud" Peterson, was made at the "Focus the Nation" climate change event on the CU-Boulder campus today, with Gov. Ritter giving a rousing kick off speech.

Colorado's Governor Bill Ritter is a national climate action leader who pioneered among the nation's most stringent climate action goals, has doubled the state's Renewable Energy Portfolio, and led a broad-based, bi-partisan effort to develop the nation's fastest growing renewable energy economy. In remarks to a packed Boulder campus auditorium, he spoke compellingly of the opportunities for leadership and prosperity Colorado is



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uniquely positioned to capture as a powerful source of diverse renewable energy resources.

Boulder students are opting to move about \$50,000 a year in student funding for wind energy into the governor's new program. CU-Boulder students are excited that their funds will help support new community-based clean energy and climate mitigation projects in Colorado.

"Our students are already actively engaged in local community climate change reduction efforts - and the CCF program will increase these efforts," said Peterson. "This is a great example both of the leadership of Gov. Ritter on climate change issues and of our students in answering his call."

CU-Boulder will work with the Governor's Energy Office to develop guidelines and criteria that ensure the student funds are used for projects that meet stringent environmental and consumer standards. The CCF is the first of its kind in the nation. The so-called 'local offset' projects pioneered by the CCF will reduce Colorado's greenhouse gas emissions while increasing economic and community development across the state.

CCF's innovative approach to reducing carbon is based on developing broad based public/private funding sources for community-based clean energy and climate mitigation projects, and then directly investing those funds in Colorado-based projects that reduce carbon emissions.

CCF's local approach will provide high quality, credible offsets for individuals, businesses and government agencies interested in mitigating their carbon footprint. At the same time, the CCF projects help all Coloradans meet the state's aggressive climate mitigation objectives.

Eight years ago, CU students were the first in the nation to vote to pay for the development of wind energy supplies for student-run campus buildings. Hundreds of colleges and thousands of businesses nationwide have now followed CU students' lead.

The result: the U.S. wind energy market is the world's fastest growing, increasing at more than 33 percent in the U.S. annually, even in a booming world market.

In 2000, CU students voted to pay \$1 per semester to help fund wind energy for student-run buildings. In Colorado, CU students' wind-energy dollars in 2002 helped double the number of wind turbines at Xcel Energy's Ponnequin wind farm in northern Colorado.



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Statewide since 2000, installed capacity of wind energy has grown from 20 megawatts to 291 MW in 2007-with 322 MW of additional capacity announced or planned by various Colorado providers. One megawatt of wind energy is sufficient to power about 600 homes, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

At the same time, hundreds of campuses across the nation are now estimated to be buying renewable energy credits-or RECs, according to the EPA. RECs are a financial tool where the buyer can claim the environmental benefit of wind without being directly powered by a wind turbine.

CU students have, since 2005, been purchasing RECs for the three student-run campus buildings equal to 100 percent of the electrical load of those buildings.

The students' new efforts come on the heels of student government commitments in 2007 to become climate neutral-and a new \$500,000 fund to support extensive energy conservation and efficiency efforts in student-run buildings.

CU student government is the nation's only campus government to stand with nearly 300 college presidents and chancellors in a national campaign to commit institutions of higher education to climate neutrality. The American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment campaign kicked off in fall 2006. Chancellor Bud Peterson signed the commitment in February 2007.