



## **Emissions-trading plan proposed**

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SACRAMENTO, California — Seven western U.S. states and four Canadian provinces on Tuesday proposed a comprehensive program to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, manufacturers and vehicles.

The Western Climate Initiative would establish a regional market to trade carbon emissions credits and is designed to keep down costs for those affected. It covers more polluters than other regional plans adopted in the United States, Canada and Europe.

“We’re sending a strong message to our federal governments that states and provinces are moving forward in the absence of federal action, and we’re setting the stage for national programs that are just as aggressive,” Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said in a statement.

The plan is aimed at cutting the region’s carbon emissions below 2005 levels by 2020, a roughly 15 percent reduction.

The idea is to allow industries that emit greenhouse gases to buy and sell credits for their emissions. Businesses that cannot cut their emissions enough can buy the right to pollute from cleaner companies.

The plan was drafted by Arizona, California, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, and by the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

While environmental groups generally support the proposal, they said it might allow states to be too easy on industry if they impose only the minimal benchmarks — setting the stage for state-by-state campaigns to strengthen the rules.

“It basically would amount to a giant handout to polluters unless the states take further action,” said Bernadette Del Chiaro, director of the clean energy program at Environment California.

California air regulators said the program would combat global warming in the most cost-effective manner, spur green technologies, clean up the region’s energy supplies and reduce dependence on foreign oil.

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