

Dane County: Dane County's work on renewables can be national template in wake of new national climate change report

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Dane County Advances Large Scale Solar Developments, Pursuit of Carbon Reducing Vehicle Bio-Fuels from Landfill to Confront Climate Change

“The scientific debate on climate change is over; what’s left is a political debate propped up by corporations and politicians who profit from the use of fossil fuel.”

In the wake of a new national report highlighting both the environmental and economic dangers posed by climate change, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi today called on local government leaders across the state and country to accelerate efforts at reducing carbon emissions.

“Based on the recent news out of Washington D.C. in the past few days, it’s clearly incumbent upon us all to take the reins on the issue of climate change and demonstrate the leadership needed to mitigate the impacts of flooding, extreme heat, and drought that even the President’s administration now says will be prevalent in our future,” Parisi said. “The scientific debate on climate change is over; what’s left is a political debate propped up by corporations and politicians who profit from the use of fossil fuels,” Parisi said.

Shortly after taking office, Parisi initiated a countywide effort to convert Dane County vehicles, including diesel powered snowplows, to run on cleaner burning compressed natural gas generated by rotting trash at the county landfill. To date, that effort that has resulted in the conversion of 70 county vehicles to fuel that reduces carbon emissions. By the end of next year, Dane County will have converted nearly half of its entire fleet of snowplows (29 of 60) that up until recently ran exclusively on diesel.

Beginning early next year, those plows and other vehicles will benefit from Dane County's new bio-gas production plant being constructed at the county landfill. Construction of that nearly \$25 million project is ongoing with the majority of the facilities constructed.

Dane County also continues to lead the state and region in solar development, culminating with the recent announcement of a partnership with MG&E to construct a solar field on over 40 acres of county owned land next to the Dane County Regional Airport. This solar development will have over 20,000 panels, generating clean power for the region. It will be the 16th solar development at a Dane County facility in the past few years.

Meanwhile, county government is set to invest dollars needed to spur other wind and solar developments in our county and region. Partnering once again with Madison Gas and Electric and Joule Energy, Dane County is committed to acquiring renewable energy credits (RECs) to bring planned renewable projects to the finish line in the coming year.

These projects are ongoing as Dane County's Climate Change Council - another initiative spurred by Parisi - continues its work to model how to further the county's carbon reducing work to other local units of governments and the private sector.

"From manure digesters that greatly reduce methane and carbon emissions from agriculture, to the work we're doing to promote solar and wind development and bio-fuel production, everything we've accomplished we've done as a result of partnerships - people coming together, investing together, and benefiting together both economically and environmentally," Parisi said.