



For Immediate Release

Contacts: Stuart C. Ross, CATF

(914) 649-5037 cell / cross@catf.us

Cathy Arnold, CSPO

(480) 965-0555 / cathy.arnold@asu.edu

Leading Universities and Think Tanks Call for Massive Scale-Up of Energy Innovation to Address Climate Change

Clean Air Task Force and Arizona State University synthesis study finds common ground, plan for action in eight recent top-level studies

BOSTON (June 9, 2010) – A new report released today by Clean Air Task Force and Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes at Arizona State University finds expert consensus that the path to a clean energy economy will require a major transformation of the nation’s energy innovation process to focus on early technology scale-up as well as research and development. This will require engaging many branches of the federal government over a period of many decades, and will necessitate collaboration, not just competition, with the world’s emerging economies, particularly China and India.

“It’s become a cliché to say we need technology innovation to tackle climate change seriously, but people who say this usually mean just more research and development or maybe a carbon cap,” said Armond Cohen, executive director of Clean Air Task Force, one of the co-sponsors of the report. “The world-class institutions and experts who provided the substance for our report have issued what amounts to a clarion call for action – a massive, multi-decade energy innovation effort in the private sector, fostered by many branches of the federal government, including the Department of Defense, working in tandem with other governments, particularly emerging economies.”

The report, “Four Policy Principles for Energy Innovation and Climate Change: A Synthesis,” summarizes eight recent studies on the topic by teams at Harvard University; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Georgetown University; National Bureau of Economic Research; Brookings Institution; National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts; National Commission on Energy Policy; Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes (CSPO) at Arizona State University; Clean Air Task Force; and Clean Air-Cool Planet. The report authors found surprisingly consistent organizational conclusions, and from a synthesis of the studies, developed four policy principles to guide energy innovation over the next several decades as the most effective means to achieving a near-zero-carbon energy system by the year 2050. The report can be accessed at www.catf.us/publications.

“Despite the independence of the teams, we found remarkable convergence on some very basic principles that should guide the design of workable, comprehensive clean energy innovation policies,” says Daniel Sarewitz, CSPO co-director. “Key among them is that we are going to have to deploy lots of real stuff at a large scale in the field – and not just in the lab – to innovate our way toward a solution. That’s not going to be cheap, but it is going to be worth it. We need to start yesterday.”

Energy Innovation Synthesis Report – add one

The four policy principles set forth in the report are:

- Innovation policy is more than R&D policy; it must be aligned with deployment actions and focus on the non-technical barriers to deployment.
- No one institution, such as the Department of Energy, is capable of solving the energy/climate problem; the resources of multiple departments as diverse as NASA and the Department of Defense must be brought to bear against this critical global challenge.
- We must recognize greenhouse gas reduction as a public good, and pursue energy innovation through a public works model. Government must intervene using public procurement and regulatory mechanisms to stimulate private sector demand for innovation.
- New policies must encourage collaboration, not competition, on energy innovation with rapidly industrializing countries, particularly China and India. Both the emerging countries and the industrialized ones will realize the benefits of working together to solve this most difficult problem of the century, and beyond.

“This is much more challenging than computer technology, or even the Apollo Program or Manhattan Project, and will require the same kind of commitment to win, and occasionally fail, that marked the Cold War defense effort,” Cohen says. “We need to take these principles and apply them quickly if we are serious about climate change.”

###

Clean Air Task Force is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 dedicated to reducing atmospheric pollution through research, advocacy and private sector collaboration. For more information, please visit us at www.catf.us

Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes at Arizona State University is an interdisciplinary intellectual network aimed at enhancing the contribution of science and technology to society's pursuit of equality, justice, freedom and overall quality of life. CSPO creates knowledge and methods, educates students, cultivates public discourse, and fosters policies to help decision makers and institutions grapple with the immense power, complexity and variability of science and technology as society charts a course for the future. For more information, visit online at cspo.org.