

## Coming to a ballot near you: emissions? Warming warrant article supported

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After deliberations about school construction, police department budgets and tax credits, some voters in New Hampshire could be casting a vote at the next town meeting on whether to help curb global warming.

The Carbon Coalition, a collection of environmental groups, scientists, businesses and community leaders advocating for an energy policy that addresses climate change issues, is working to get a petitioned warrant article on as many ballots as possible, hoping a statewide call for action will get the attention of presidential candidates campaigning next year.

"It's just a good way to sort of aggregate the whole state, and then present it to a presidential wanna-be in a nice, neat little package," said Ted Leach, a coalition co-chair who helped write the model resolution.

The resolution calls for the federal government to create a plan to cut emissions of heat-trapping gases and to start a research program to promote new, sustainable energy technology. It also includes a provision by which voters can ask their selectmen to appoint an energy committee focused on saving town energy and reducing emissions.

So far, about 80 volunteers have signed up to pass petitions around in 60 towns. Nine towns already have at least the 25 signatures from registered voters needed to get the resolution on the warrant. Those are Jackson, Barrington, Bartlett, Conway, Exeter, Hancock, Newmarket, Nottingham and Wolfboro.

The plan is modeled after a 1983 call for the government to curb industrial emissions in the Midwest contributing to acid rain. Then, 200 cities and towns put the resolution on their warrants and 196 passed it, said Leach, who was publisher of the Monadnock Ledger at the time. After town meeting, he would show the news to candidates visiting the newsroom and ask their position on the issue.

"The answer you'd get was, 'That's my position exactly,' - instant buy-in," Leach said.

Roger Stephenson, associate director for external affairs at Cool Air-Clean Planet and coalition member, said the resolution is meant to be a bipartisan approach to educate voters about global warming and elevate the issue in the next campaign. His hopes are high. "We want to go statewide," he said.

Leach spearheaded an effort to get signatures in his hometown of Hancock last month. In three hours, he and other volunteers collected 330 signatures. He said he received "negligible" negative comments on it. Unlike with acid rain, he believes the general public knows about the dangers of global warming and wants action.

"The public is way ahead of the politicians on this issue," he said.

Leach predicted that global warming will be among the top 10 election issues in 2008.

***(For more information, log on to [carboncoalition.org](http://carboncoalition.org).)***

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