

## 2008 Behavior, Energy and Climate Change Conference Roundtable Abstract

### 16. How Can Local Governments Use New Tools to Increase Their Effectiveness in Climate Policy Making?

Moderator: Kif Scheuer, Strategic Energy Innovations

**Abstract:** Integrating climate protection into the operations of local governments through is essential to achieve ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals. However, changing the policy making process, may require a paradigm shift in the culture of public decision-making. While local governments are often motivated to adopt climate change policies, many of them lack the individual and organizational capacities to change as rapidly as circumstances demand.

To address this challenge, some local governments and their partners are capitalizing on new resources such as online decision-support and social networking tools to assist in making this paradigm shift. From the California Sustainability Alliance's Zero Carbon Communities pilot to, ICLEI's Climate and Air Pollution Planning Assistant, to the City of Ontario's Online General Plan, we are seeing a reconfiguring of traditional policy making practices. At the root of these new approaches lies the application of social innovation to public sector decision-making.

We invite you to share ideas, insights and experiences with regard to;

- Ideas for innovative partnerships to respond effectively to climate change
- Examples of new tools and approaches being deployed among local governments
- Case studies of how social innovation is stimulating change within communities

Participants will strategically examine the role of social innovation in public sector climate change policy-making, and explore how social innovation approaches can create; greater transparency, increased access to technical resources and broader collaboration among local governments, thereby accelerating effective climate change policymaking.

**Bio:** Kif Scheuer holds a PhD in environmental psychology and an MSc in architectural technologies, both from the University of Michigan. His undergraduate degree is in architecture from Columbia University. For his dissertation he examined psychological factors in the adoption of residential green building practices. For his master's thesis, Kif used life-cycle analysis methods to study sections of the LEED 2.0 green building program. He has also researched co-housing, neighborhood walkability, and community gardening.

As a program manager at Strategic Energy Innovations, Kif's primary focus is on sustainability initiatives in the municipal sector. He is currently heading up a project funded by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to facilitate climate planning in an underserved Bay Area community and to develop a toolkit of climate policy resources. He also is developing a sustainability certificate program with Dominican University of California and a solar installer training program with Skyline College.