



King County



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New Guidebook Will Help Communities Prepare for Climate Change Impacts

"Preparing for Climate Change" Guidebook Released at Mayors' Sundance Summit

Sundance, Utah -- Local government leaders have a new tool to help them plan for the impacts of climate change, such as an increased risk of drought and flooding, new diseases, and invasive species that are harmful to humans and the environment. Ron Sims, the elected Executive of King County, released the guidebook, *Preparing for Climate Change: A Guidebook for Local, Regional and State Governments*, at the third annual Sundance Summit: A Mayors' Gathering on Climate Protection where more than 40 mayors are meeting to discuss their local climate action.

The guidebook is available at:

Climate Impacts Group: <http://www.cses.washington.edu/cig/fpt/guidebook.shtml>
King County: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/globalwarming/>
ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability: www.iclei.org/usa

More information on the Sundance Summit is available at www.sundancesummit.com

The guidebook was co-authored by the **Climate Impacts Group** at the University of Washington, **Sims**, who conceived of and co-authored the book, and King County's climate team. **ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability** is a contributing partner and is distributing the guidebook nationally to its more than 250 U.S. member cities, towns and counties.

Preparing for Climate Change: A Guidebook for Local, Regional, and State Governments draws heavily on the Climate Impacts Group's experience in researching and communicating information on climate change impacts and planning to Pacific Northwest decision makers, and on King County's experience in developing and implementing its climate plan. The Climate Impacts Group, based at the University of Washington, is one of eight regional climate impacts assessment groups in the nation funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and is part of the Center for Science in the Earth System at the Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Ocean.

The guidebook will be another of ICLEI's climate tools, in addition to mitigation work, and will become part of the organization's Climate Resilient Communities program, which is administered by NOAA. The program enables communities to integrate climate preparedness strategies into

existing hazard mitigation plans, reduce the costs associated with disaster relief, and prioritize vulnerabilities such as infrastructure, water supply, and human health.

Executive Sims was initially inspired to write the guidebook with Climate Impacts Group after hosting a large conference on the regional effects of climate change in October 2005. Local leaders attending the conference and those working with ICLEI and the Climate Impacts Group have expressed the need for this type of resource to help with the new work of adaptation facing communities across the nation.

In response to this need, the guidebook is designed to facilitate planning for climate impacts by specifying practical steps and strategies that can be used to build community resilience into the future. These steps include creating a climate change preparedness team; identifying community vulnerabilities to climate change; and identifying, selecting, and implementing adaptation options.

“Foresight is good government; it’s the essence of what we do as leaders,” said **Executive Sims**, who addressed the mayors Tuesday afternoon. “The actions we take today will dramatically affect the quality of life in 2050 for our region’s projected 2.5 million residents, including our children and grandchildren. I know that other regional leaders across the United States share this perspective, and I want our county’s experience to help them plan for their future generations.”

“Communities all over the nation and the world are beginning to get serious about preparing for climate change,” said **Amy Snover, Assistant Director of the Center for Science in the Earth System at the University of Washington, and a lead author of the Guidebook**. “Especially in the United States there is very little guidance on where to find relevant information about the impacts of climate change or how to go about preparing for them. Our guidebook will fill this gap, providing the guidance communities need for mapping their course in a changing future.”

"More and more, local governments are effectively implementing mitigation techniques to reduce the impacts of climate change," said **Michelle Wyman, Executive Director of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability U.S.A.** “Our partnership with King County, NOAA, and the Climate Impacts Group enables us to offer cities and counties a parallel set of tools that focus on climate adaptation and preparedness as we increasingly anticipate unavoidable climate change impacts on our communities."

Earlier this year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report, *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, which indicated that certain areas in the United States are already susceptible to flooding, coastal erosion, drought, heat waves, health impacts, and intense hurricanes and wildfires due to climate change.