

**For Immediate Release**

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**New report calls for seven priority actions to improve air quality and address a changing climate**

*The Utah Roadmap outlines a Utah approach to reduce air emissions*

**January 6, 2020 (Salt Lake City, Utah)** - The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute today released a breakthrough report designed to inform Utah's efforts to improve air quality and address a changing climate. The report, which is called ***The Utah Roadmap***, was requested by the Utah Legislature and includes seven priority strategies to reduce air emissions in Utah. If followed, these strategies will protect Utahns' health, support economic development (particularly in Utah's growing tech sector), advance Utah's Olympic bid, and support Utah energy economies in transition.

"Utahns feel a sense of urgency to improve air quality," said Natalie Gochnour, Director of the Gardner Institute. "The strategies in this report build from the Utah Legislature's House Concurrent Resolution 7 in the 2018 General Legislative Session to recognize the dual benefit to Utah's air shed and the climate as we reduce air emissions in Utah, all in a way that protects our health and strengthens our economy."

The Utah Roadmap includes the findings of a six-month expert assessment involving input from representatives of Utah's research universities; federal, state and local government; industry; health care; and the non-profit sector. Among the major findings were the following:

- **Success stories** – Utah is making significant progress in curtailing emissions. Of particular note is the conversion to Tier 3 fuels; investments in renewable natural gas, wind and solar; conversion to electric-hybrid buses; and investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- **Air quality/climate link** – There is a link between improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By reducing auto dependency, improving energy efficiency, and advancing innovative energy solutions, Utah can address both challenges simultaneously.
- **Utah's Co2 footprint** – Utah's overall CO2 emissions are small on a national and global scale, representing 1.1% of the national footprint and 0.2% of the global footprint.

Utah's per capita CO2 emissions at 19.3 metric tons are higher than the national average of 16.0 metric tons and are higher than Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, and California. Utah's reliance occurs because of the state's coal-fired power plants, which are all set to convert to natural gas, hydrogen, or close within the study's timeframe.

The Gardner Institute selected seven priority actions for gubernatorial, legislative, and individual action. At the top of the list is a recommendation that the state adopt by executive order, resolution or statute a goal to reduce criteria pollutant air emissions by 50% and CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050.

“These goals will inform our individual as well as collective actions,” said Tom Holst, senior energy analyst for the Gardner Institute. “Much like a map provides direction, The Utah Roadmap provides a guide to Utahns and state decisionmakers as we travel along the path to cleaner air and responsible global citizenship.”

The Utah Roadmap also encourages the following actions, in summary form, many of which are already underway:

- **Lead by example** – State government to convert to an all-electric/compressed natural/renewable natural gas fleet where practical, adopt energy efficiency goals in state buildings, and establish telework targets.
- **Create premier air quality/changing climate solutions laboratory** – State government to establish and fund a premier state-level air quality/changing climate research solutions laboratory to improve the monitoring network, advance new technologies, and convene entrepreneurs and experts to innovate.
- **Accelerate quality growth efforts** – Utah to redouble quality growth efforts, including investment in transit, critical land preservation, and the linking of economic development with transportation and housing decisions.
- **Position Utah as the market-based electric vehicle state** – Utah to expand the state’s network of EV charging stations and incentivize EV/CNG/RNG use (particularly for older vehicles and large fleets).
- **Provide significant economic transition assistance to rural communities** – The state to prioritize economic development assistance in energy-transition areas such as a Carbon and Emery counties.
- **Participate in national dialogue about market-based approaches to reduce carbon emissions** – The state to actively participate in national discussions about how to harness the power of market forces and new technologies to reduce carbon emissions in a way that does not negatively impact Utahns.

These priority actions are accompanied in The Utah Roadmap by 54 other high-impact, low-cost options to reduce emissions.

In addition to convening technical experts in a collaborative process, the Gardner Institute conducted roundtable discussions and focus groups with public interest groups, legislators, businesses, and college students to garner feedback. Two focus groups were hosted in rural Utah (Richfield and Duchesne).

The Utah Roadmap is available for public discussion through January 27, 2020. A final version will be submitted to the Utah Legislature by the end of January 2020.

“The Gardner Institute was given a challenging assignment by the Utah Legislature to prepare a roadmap on this complex issue, in a short time frame, on an emotionally-charged topic,” said Gochnour. “Utahns have a long and proud history of leading on challenging topics, whether it be refugee resettlement, immigration reform,

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anti-discrimination statues, quality growth, or religious freedom. The Utah Roadmap presents another opportunity for Utah to lead.”

### **Technical Advisory Committee**

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