Mobilizing Regional Climate Action in Tompkins County

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Climate Smart Community Webinar
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• Climate change already underway in New York
• Average temperatures in have risen by 2°F since 1970 – winter temperatures 4°F warmer
• 67% increase in number of 2-inch rainfall events occurring over 48-hour period since 1950s
• Changes in NY precipitation patterns projected: increased amount in winter and decreased amount in late summer or fall

• Lower rainfall amounts in summer may lead to more droughts
• Warmer temperatures and changing precipitation patterns bring both challenges and opportunities for NY agriculture

• Increased insect, disease, and weed pressure, but also longer growing season – lengthened by nearly week since 1960s
• Local infrastructure, energy grid, schools, hospitals vulnerable to impact of climate change

• Railways and roads in low-lying areas, water treatment plants, bridges may need to be relocated or rebuilt due to changing climate

• Emergency plans will need to anticipate increased incidences of flooding and road closures
• Local and regional planners need to integrate climate change trends into comprehensive planning, not just emergency planning

• Will allow communities to adapt and become more resilient

• Key to success in Tompkins County is effectiveness of collaboration among different community sectors: government, education, business, nonprofit
• Fortunate to have forward-looking planners in Tompkins County who are doing both

• Tompkins County, City of Ithaca, and towns of Ithaca and Caroline all NYS Climate Smart Communities

• Also, County providing leadership for development and implementation of regional sustainability plan: Cleaner Greener Communities
Tompkins County
The Collaborative Landscape

- Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative (TCCPI)
- Park Foundation Local Sustainability Initiative
- Sustainable Tompkins
- Ithaca Carshare
- Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming
- Black Oak Wind Farm
- Solar Tompkins

leveraging resources and building bridges
What is TCCPI?

• **Regional multisector collaboration** launched in June 2008

• **Seeks to leverage climate action commitments** made by:
  o Cornell University
  o Ithaca College
  o Tompkins Cortland Community College
  o Tompkins County
  o City of Ithaca, towns of Caroline, Dryden, and Ithaca

• **Website**: [www.tccpi.org](http://www.tccpi.org)
Strategy:

• Establish and mobilize a multisector coalition of local community leaders who are committed to:
  o Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
  o Accelerating transition to clean energy
  o Increasing energy efficiency and energy conservation
  o Strengthening campus and community resiliency

• Leaders-as-host, engaging stakeholders as co-creators: collaborate and connect, not command and control
Communications and Outreach

- Monthly meetings of steering committee and general group
  - Serve as sounding board for county climate adaptation & energy planning
- Website & Facebook Page
- Bimonthly electronic newsletter
- Annual report on member accomplishments
Examples of projects:

- Tompkins Energy Conservation Corps and other youth engagement efforts (Youth Leadership Summit last spring)
- EPA Climate Showcase Community grant: EcoVillage at Ithaca
- Get Your GreenBack Tompkins: Countywide energy campaign to raise public awareness:
  - Black Oak Wind Farm: 11.9MW community wind project
  - Ithaca 2030 District: Cornell Cooperative Extension, HOLT Architects, Taitem Engineers, Travis Hyde Properties (www.2030districts.org)
Conclusion:

• Communities that work together to embrace sustainability and resilience and embed them into mission, vision, and leadership will flourish in 21st century

Food for Thought
“In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”- Eric Hoffer

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Thank you!