



PRESS RELEASE

**For immediate release
December 2, 2015**

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About IATP

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. IATP is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota with an office in Washington D.C.

U.S. rural leaders and advocates release climate change policy priorities

Rural leaders emphasize resilience and equity as global climate talks begin

MINNEAPOLIS, MN/PARIS, FRANCE – Rural organizations, leaders and experts in the U.S. outlined the challenges climate change poses to rural communities and a set of policy priorities, “Rural Climate Policy Priorities: Solutions from the Ground,” released today during the first week of global climate talks in Paris.

U.S. rural communities are diverse and there is no one-size-fits-all climate solution. Rural America will be disproportionately impacted by climate change. On average, rural residents are more food and energy insecure and earn less than their urban counterparts, and rural communities are more likely to have natural resource-based economies than urban communities. The Rural Climate Policy Priorities, endorsed by 23 organizations, outlines transformative and long-term policy approaches to climate change that encourage resilience, equity, democracy and local ownership and control.

“Agriculture has some unique solutions to offer in tackling our global climate crisis, and these Rural Climate Policy Priorities provide a national forum to encourage policies that support farmers in adapting to and mitigating climate change,” says Renata Brillinger of the California Climate and Agriculture Network.

“As insurance premiums soar and droughts worsen, businesses from a range of sectors—agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing—are looking for both market based and legislative solutions to address these threats,” says Richard Eidlin of the American Sustainable Business Council, one of the endorsers. “Thousands of businesses, particularly small and mid-sized companies, see climate change as a serious challenge to their financial solvency.”

While only 18 percent of the U.S. population lives in rural areas, 84 percent of the country’s geography is rural. This means rural communities hold the key to many climate solutions, including renewable energy production; forests, farms and rangelands that can capture carbon when managed appropriately; and the people and ingenuity required for successfully transitioning to a low carbon economy. “Rural America is

home to a small enough percentage of the population that it's often overlooked by policymakers, but it holds a vast majority of the nation's land and natural resources, which are key to the entire country's clean energy future," says Tara Ritter of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

"Rural America need not be the victim, but actually, the champion for reversing the increased carbon in our atmosphere," says Jeff Goebel, of the conflict resolution and consensus building organization About Listening. "This coalition of participating organizations can lead the way to tremendous social benefit, including stabilizing climate conditions, adaptability and resiliency to current conditions, increased food and fiber production, increased rural prosperity, increased quality freshwater supply and stabilized species diversity."

The Rural Climate Policy Priorities outline climate solutions for multiple areas of rural communities and economies, including agriculture, conservation, education, energy, fisheries, forestry, health, infrastructure, recreation and tourism.

"Federal and state policymakers should read this platform assembled by the Rural Climate Network for insights into what steps must be taken to preserve the nation's rural communities and the businesses that serve them," says Eidlin.

The Rural Policy Priorities are available at: www.iatp.org and www.ruralclimatenetwork.org/policy-priorities