

## Editors' Note

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### Recommended Citation

Novins, Lisa and Addie Haughey. "Editors' Note." *Sustainable Development Law & Policy*, Winter 2009, 1.

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# EDITORS' NOTE

The debate over both domestic and international climate policy continues to evolve each year, adapting to broader global politics and ever changing current events. Today, at the forefront of everyone's mind is the global financial crisis. In both the financial crisis and the climate crisis, the unknown factors are the most frightening. While the immediacy of the financial crisis impacts each of our lives, we must not forget the longer term and potentially much more severe and lasting impacts of the climate crisis. As Australian professor Ross Garnaut recently noted, the unprecedented "financial crisis—no matter how severe—will be short-lived and should not stand in the way of action on global climate change."

Perhaps it is because the world's global policy focus is on the financial industry that so many of our submissions focused instead on local, regional, and to a lesser degree, national climate issues. It is encouraging to see the real progress outlined in many of our articles—as one of our authors says, local and regional governments are, in some situations, particularly well poised to deal with climate adaptation measures.

While the 2009 Copenhagen climate negotiations are looming only months away, the global climate debate continues. The United States is finally beginning to not only to take steps towards reducing its own carbon dioxide ("CO<sub>2</sub>") emissions but also is poised to reengage in the dialogue and move towards a post-Kyoto framework. This new energy and resolve is exemplified by President Obama's commitment, during his first address to a joint session of Congress, to placing a "market-based cap on carbon pollution" and driving domestic renewable energy production.

Despite other world events, it is most certainly time for all countries to engage in the global dialogue and seriously commit to binding CO<sub>2</sub> reductions. As this issue illustrates all too well, the potentially catastrophic effects of global warming are not only appearing in the data and statistics but also becoming visible in the daily lives of many people around the planet. And as we have heard all too many times, it is not those of us who are most responsible for the greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions that are feeling the heat; it is those of us who have the fewest resources to adapt that are most severely impacted.

We hope you enjoy this fifth annual edition of *Sustainable Development Law & Policy's* ("SDLP's") Climate Law Reporter. In these five years, we have seen the discourse evolve. Five years ago, many still questioned whether to act. Today the debate is no longer whether or when to act; the debate is focused how and where to act. This issue covers a wide range of topics from addressing climate change in a human rights context to using legal tools to help Indigenous populations deal with the climate impacts for which they are not responsible.

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As is evidenced by our diverse authors, we have become an important international venue in the global climate debate. We hope this issue of SDLP helps push the discourse beyond debate and towards action, because our future and our livelihoods depend on it.



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