



MEDIA RELEASE

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ALABAMA SIERRA CLUB WILL ASK MAYOR TO SIGN ONTO 'COOL CITIES' INITIATIVES

NEW ORLEANS – The Mobile Group of the Sierra Club will ask Mobile mayor Samuel L. Jones to support the club's "Cool Cities" program when the Mobile City Council meets on Tuesday, Aug. 29 – the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

Mayors who adopt the "Cool Cities" Initiative are making a commitment to the Climate Protection Agreement and are agreeing to implement innovative energy solutions that cut dependence on fossil fuels, benefit public health and save taxpayer dollars.

"Leaders in the club are convinced by scientific research that the burning of fossil fuels, oil, coal and petroleum to power our cars, homes and businesses is causing the acceleration of climate change," says David Underhill, the chair of the Mobile Group of the Sierra Club. "Scientists tell us the extreme climates we are experiencing can only be attributed to the burning of fossil fuels. Studies tell us that greenhouse gas and particulate air pollution pose serious threats to our health, safety and environment. Headlines verify this almost daily with reports of endangered species, melting ice caps and ever-more frequent hurricanes and storms."

This "Cool Cities" Initiative sets the goal of reducing levels of carbon dioxide pollution to 7 percent below their 1990 levels by 2012. Underhill says that the country's inability to reduce carbon dioxide pollution at the federal level is encouraging Sierra

Club's membership to reach out to local governments to ask mayors to sign on to the club's energy campaign.

If the agreement is signed by the mayor, Mobile will become the first city in Alabama to take part in the program. Almost 300 mayors have signed on so far and the list is growing. The initiative was passed unanimously at the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting last year.

“The first step is for the mayor to take the Cities for Climate Protection Pledge, which sets the goal of reducing levels of carbon dioxide pollution,” says Underhill. “After the signing, the mayor generally appoints a government official to identify and implement climate change opportunities.”

The official works with a citizen's committee to conduct a global warming emissions inventory which will identify the city's major carbon dioxide sources, the greatest opportunities for reductions, and goals for the plan. After completing the global warming inventory, a solutions plan is developed to reduce emissions while lowering energy costs for the city. The Sierra Club recognizes three main strategies to lower city fossil fuel emissions: green vehicle fleets; energy efficiency; and renewable energy:

“I hope the mayor has the foresight to sign onto this far-reaching and visionary initiative,” says Underhill. “It's more than just a symbolic gesture. It's a sign that we need are committed to making some major investments to improve the way we live.”

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The Sierra Club's 750,000 members work together to protect communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Alabama chapter of the Sierra Club has more than 3,500 members and has been active in local conservation projects for more than 30 years. For more information, contact the organization's website: www.alabama.sierraclub.org.