

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Utah Business and Community Leaders Declare Support for Exploring Climate Change Risks and Solutions

SALT LAKE CITY, Nov. 14, 2017 – Prominent Utah leaders from business, government, higher education, faith communities and civic organizations united on Nov. 14, 2017 to sign a declaration acknowledging shared responsibility for protecting Utah’s economy, air quality and environment, and safeguarding against the risks of climate change. The gathering kicked off *Path to Positive Utah*, a collaborative initiative sponsored by Utah Clean Energy and ecoAmerica, that represents a diverse group of leaders seeking to understand, prepare for and raise awareness about climate change risks and solutions.

Local notables who signed the declaration include Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski, Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams, Zions Bank President and CEO Scott Anderson, Goldman Sachs Vice President Dean Soukup, Episcopal Diocese of Utah Bishop Scott Hayashi, former Director of the Department of Environmental Quality Amanda Smith, past chair of the Utah Public Service Commission Ted Boyer, and Gardner Company president and CEO Christian Gardner, to name a few.

Forty leaders have already signed the declaration, which is open to all Utah leaders interested in harnessing their leadership to advance conversations about and solutions to climate change. *Path to Positive Utah* will empower leaders through educational materials, trainings and seminars, and will help share participating organizations’ successes.

“Utah is a pioneering state, and in that innovative spirit, we hope to inspire and support communities to forge a new path toward positive climate change outcomes,” said Sarah Wright, executive director of Utah Clean Energy. “I am proud to stand with this group of *Path to Positive Utah* leaders and to demonstrate Utah’s leadership and ability to work together to address tough challenges, including climate change.”

Utahns are seeing the impacts of climate change now. The recent and unprecedented series of extreme weather events on American soil and around the globe have taken many lives, dramatically disrupted millions more and generated hundreds of billions of dollars in devastating property damage. A recent Dan Jones poll commissioned by the Salt Lake Tribune and the Hinckley Institute of Politics found that 64 percent of Utahns recognize that human activity is exacerbating climate change.

“The latest draft of the U.S. National Climate Assessment confirmed the long-standing consensus on climate change: it is [‘extremely likely’](#) that human activities have driven the majority of warming in recent decades,” stated Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski. “While this knowledge can be sobering in light of severe disruptions from recent hurricanes and wildfires, it can also motivate an inspired response to reduce carbon emissions in Utah, where we are warming at twice the global average.”

Wright said there are many affordable, proven strategies that businesses, government and individuals can put into place that will reduce carbon emissions, improve Utah's air quality and deliver the long-term benefit of a stable climate. Advancing clean energy and energy efficiency measures in homes and businesses can make a significant difference in the short term, and over time.

"Utah is a hub for innovation in clean energy and energy efficient buildings," said Christian Gardner, president and CEO of the Gardner Company. "As a developer, I know that advancing solutions to climate change and air quality will help bring new business opportunities and talent to our state."

"Climate change is an important issue for our state's economy and quality of life. It's time to talk about it now, as businesses, policy makers and residents plan for our future," concluded Scott Anderson, president and CEO of Zions Bank.

Utah Business and Community Leaders Express Support for Path to Positive Utah--

The following Utah business leaders offered statements supporting Path to Positive Utah, and the exploration of climate change risks and solutions in Utah:

Dean Soukup, Vice President, Goldman Sachs

"Goldman Sachs acknowledges the scientific consensus that climate change is a reality and that human activities are responsible for increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere. Delaying action on climate change will be costly for our natural environment, to humans and to the economy, and we believe that urgent action by government, business, consumers and civil society is necessary to curb greenhouse gas emissions."

Vance Checketts, Vice President and General Manager, Dell EMC

"It's not hard to believe that a lot of Utahns feel that our state's spectacular National Parks, greatest snow on earth and breath-taking mountain scenery are out of this world. At Dell EMC, we agree! That is why we set out to form a new Employee Resource Group (ERG) called Planet Utah. Our Mission: To be environmental stewards that work toward fostering a sustainable future. We work to engage our team members, area businesses and community leaders to make our community a clean and safe place to live and work for this and future generations."

Amanda Smith, past executive director, Utah Department of Environmental Quality and Attorney, Holland & Hart

"Utah has a history of working together to confront major environmental challenges, which I witnessed firsthand at the Department of Environmental Quality. As a long-time Utahn and a parent, I'm excited to be part of the conversation about climate change through Path to Positive Utah."

Chris Librie, Senior Director, Global Impact & Giving, eBay

"Sustainability and climate change are at the heart of eBay's corporate responsibility and commitment to our employees and community. Our participation in Path to Positive Utah and ongoing partnership with community leaders in Utah are key elements in bringing to life our vision for enabling greener forms of commerce over the long term."

Amy Wildermuth, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Sustainability Officer, University of Utah

"Climate change is one of the most pressing and difficult issues of our time, and we are committed to doing our part to respond to it through our research, teaching, and operations at the University of Utah."

Chris Robinson, Chair, Summit County Council

"Climate change is impacting our waterways, agriculture and snowpack upon which communities like Summit County rely. By acting together as wise stewards of our natural resources, we can preserve and create new economic opportunities in our rural communities."

Ted Boyer, past chair, Utah Public Service Commission

"Regardless of your understanding of how human activity influences climate change generally (and air pollution in Utah specifically), we owe it to ourselves, our children and future generations to understand and minimize any such negative influences."

Bishop Scott Hayashi, Episcopal Diocese of Utah

"Caring for God's creation by engaging climate change is not only good for the environment, but also good for the health and welfare of our people."

Bob Perkowitz, President, ecoAmerica

"I am inspired by this diverse group of Utah leaders coming together to participate in Path to Positive Utah. These leaders' commitments herald a new era of climate leadership that any state can emulate. We are proud to partner on this great initiative."

For a full list of Path to Positive Utah leaders and their comments, visit <https://pathtopositiveutah.org/leaders>.

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About Utah Clean Energy

Utah Clean Energy is Utah's leading, expert, public interest organization working to expand renewable energy, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency in a way that is beneficial not only for Utah's environment and health, but our economy and long-term energy security. Utah Clean Energy is committed to creating a future that ensures healthy, thriving communities for all, empowered and sustained by clean energy resources such as solar, wind and energy efficiency.

www.utahcleanenergy.org.

About ecoAmerica

ecoAmerica builds institutional leadership, public support, and political will for climate solutions in the United States. We help national mainstream organizations elevate their climate leadership, providing them strategy, tools and resources to: demonstrate visible climate leadership, empower climate literacy, engage all constituents, and build collective action and advocacy. We help our partners permanently transform into national climate leaders who inspire others on solutions and commit to climate neutrality.

<https://ecoamerica.org/>