



DATE: January 28, 2008

CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215

ADEQ Director Owens Invites Navajo Nation to Join with Arizona and Other Western States to Address Climate Change

WINDOW ROCK, Arizona (Jan. 28, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Steve Owens invited leaders of the Navajo Nation to join with Arizona and other Western states to address climate change by joining the Western Climate Initiative (WCI), a collaborative effort by seven Western states and two Canadian provinces to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the West.

The WCI was launched in 2007 by Governor Janet Napolitano and four other Western governors. The WCI presently consists of Arizona, California, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington State, along with the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Manitoba, as full “partners.” Six other U.S. states, two additional Canadian provinces and four Mexican states participate as “observers” in the WCI. Director Owens serves as co-chair of the WCI.

In remarks before the Navajo Nation Council, Owens said that the WCI welcomes participation by tribal governments, and he encouraged the Navajo Nation to become the first tribe to join the WCI.

“If we are going to effectively reduce GHG emissions in the West, we need to work closely with our tribal partners,” Director Owens said. “The Navajo Nation can be a real leader in the effort to stop climate change by being the first tribe to participate in the Western Climate Initiative.”

Owens also encouraged the Navajo Nation to join The Climate Registry, a multi-national group comprised of more than 40 U.S. states (including Arizona), tribes, Canadian provinces and Mexican states, which is developing protocols for reporting GHG emissions and reductions. Owens told the Navajo Nation Council that three tribes are members of The Climate Registry, but the involvement of the Navajo Nation is needed as The Climate Registry moves forward with its work. “We need the Navajo Nation at the table with us as we develop protocols for keeping track of greenhouse gas emissions,” Owens said.

Owens added that Western states and tribes already have been feeling the effects of climate change in recent years, such as prolonged drought, decreased snowfall, increased and earlier snowmelt, and more severe forest and rangeland fires. Moreover, scientific studies show that the Southwest will be particularly hard hit by climate change in the future. “We all need to work together to solve this very serious problem,” Owens said.