

[This is the eleventh post in a series expressing my view of why California's actions on climate change are so important and how they will change the world. The [introductory post](#) provides an overview and some general context.]

In 2015, about a year and a half before the international climate meetings in Paris, Jerry Brown met with the Environment Minister from the German state of Baden-Württemberg. They decried the lack of voice in the international climate discussions for sub-national governments, even those of the size and sophistication of California and Baden-Württemberg. From that meeting was born the idea of the [Under2 Coalition](#).

Sub-national governments – states like California and Baden-Württemberg, as well as cities and certain regional governments – are central to climate action. It is estimated that 70% of all climate action occurs at the sub-national level. Yet, in international negotiations (such as those that resulted in the Paris Agreement), states and cities have little voice. The Under2 Coalition was created to change that dynamic, and also to bolster sub-national and international action on climate.

Today, the Under2 Coalition has over 200 signatories and endorsers across every continent and every economic type (from rain forest to agricultural to industrial juggernaut and everything in between), representing 1.3 billion people and 40% of global GNP. These jurisdictions are self-selected among those that seek greater climate action. As such, the Under2 Coalition represents a significant opportunity to build political will and scale.

The Under2 Coalition is focused on three building blocks to action: inventories/baselines; pathways to 2030/50 reductions; and work groups focused on the policy and other actions that will result in emission reduction. First, jurisdictions need accurate baseline inventories of GHG emissions so that they can measure progress. This turns out to be more difficult and less available than one might suspect. And it is not just sub-nationals that lack some basic GHG inventory information. So, one of the first tasks of the Under2 Coalition is to identify jurisdictions without sufficient inventories and help them build that data set.

In addition, as we know in California, determining the pathways and tradeoffs for significant GHG emission reductions in the 2030 and 2050 time frames are important and challenging. Pathways for rain forest states, for agrarian economies, and for advanced industrial regions, will be quite different. The Under2 Coalition is working with various pathways organizations to build that data, jurisdiction by

jurisdiction.

Finally, and most importantly, the various states within the Under2 Coalition are working together on various aspects of GHG emission reduction. For example, one group is focused on emission from the health sector. Another is working on actions around methane. A third group is working on transition from coal to renewables.

All of these activities are designed to deal with the issues of political will, scale, technology, and finance. The Under2 Coalition includes the jurisdictions most committed to action and therefore provides opportunities for pilot projects, innovation, faster action, and market penetration. The Coalition faces its own challenges, of course, primarily around funding; communication across time, language, and culture; staff capacity; changing political dynamics; and legal authority. Nonetheless, it is a delivery system of significant potential.

It is worth mentioning some of the other organizations that include California participation:

[International Zero-Emission Vehicle Alliance \(ZEV Alliance\)](#) (promoting ZEVs and ZEV infrastructure around the world)

[The International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification](#) (Ocean Acidification Alliance) (promoting action on ocean acidification and the creation of action plans)

[The Pacific Coast Collaborative](#) (Climate and related action by west coast North American states)

[Climate and Clean Air Coalition](#) (focused action on short-lived climate pollutants)

These and other organizations provide mechanisms to build and ensure political will and scale and therefore play an important role in California's response to climate change.

Next blog: Solutions

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