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SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

### Greenhouse Gas Management

Since December, several key events have occurred that will likely pave the way for greenhouse gas action in the United States.

In December 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formally declared that carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels poses a threat to human health and welfare. This designation is a major step to allow the federal government to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from power plants, factories, automobiles and other sources, under EPA's Clean Air Act. EPA's endangerment finding covers emissions of six key greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride.

The EPA's announcement was strategically released at the beginning of the United Nations global warming conference in Copenhagen, an indication that President Obama wanted world leaders to know that the U.S. was serious about reducing its greenhouse gas emissions.

The Copenhagen conference hoped to accomplish an agreement among worldwide leaders to different levels of greenhouse gas reductions, similar to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. Though there was no binding treaty signed, the resulting Copenhagen Accord summarizes world leaders' views that the temperature of the earth must not be allowed to rise above 2 degrees Celsius, and discusses establishing a fund so that richer nations can help poorer ones adapt to the threat of climate change. The actual results from this Accord - and which countries will sign - remains to be seen.

For now, the tracking of greenhouse gas emissions begins with large emitters in the U.S., as required by EPA's "Mandatory Reporting of Greenhouse Gases Rule". Fossil fuel and industrial GHG suppliers, motor vehicle and engine manufacturers, and facilities that emit 25,000 metric tons or more of CO2 equivalents per year will be required to report GHG emissions data to EPA annually. The first annual report covering calendar year 2010 must be submitted to EPA in 2011. For details on EPA's Mandatory GHG Reporting Rule, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/>.

Affinity Consultants, Inc. has accredited **Greenhouse Gas Verifiers (GHG-V)** and **LEED** professionals on staff. The **GHG-V** certification is through CSA America and qualifies professionals to measure and account for the accuracy and validity of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) assertions. This certification assures third-party objectivity, provides quality assurance, establishes consistency in GHG verification practices, and creates confidence in verifier competency.

"These long-overdue findings cement 2009's place in history as the year when the United States Government began addressing the challenge of greenhouse-gas pollution and seizing the opportunity of clean-energy reform," EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson.

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