



Embassy of the
Federal Republic of Germany
Washington



Transatlantic Climate Bridge

**Joint Declaration
to
Support the Exchange and Application of
Mutually Beneficial Sustainable Energy and Climate Change
Policies**

Between

**The Federal Republic of Germany
and
The Commonwealth of Virginia**

The Challenge

The scientific evidence of climate change is unambiguous and confirms that it is the greatest environmental, humanitarian and economic challenge of our generation. While climate change presents unprecedented threats to the global environment as well as to economic and social development, the crisis also offers unique opportunities to transform the production and use of energy, form new paradigms of economic development, create technological innovations to get onto the necessary pathway to a low carbon society. This also implies a promising opportunity in the light of the financial crisis we are facing today. 2009 is the year, in which we want to achieve a comprehensive UN agreement to fight global climate change in Copenhagen. This provides the chance to advance new levels of international cooperation.

All of these themes were explored and discussed at the inauguration of the “Transatlantic Climate Bridge,” co-launched by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Federal Republic of Germany, December 16, 2008, in Washington, D.C. Particular attention was given to the Federal Republic of Germany and the Commonwealth of Virginia’s shared responsibilities for greenhouse gas emissions and the technical, personnel, and institutional resources within each country to promote change toward more sustainable climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. The launch of the Bridge also highlighted the mutual benefits to be realized in both countries through joint collaboration at the international, national and sub-national levels.

It is in that context that the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Federal Republic of Germany feel the desire to more formally institutionalize the exchange and application of mutually beneficial climate mitigation and adaptation policies.

The Program

The Federal Republic of Germany and the Commonwealth of Virginia share the view that joint activities are necessary and vital to contribute to the global combat on Climate Change. The following activities should, therefore, be carried out under this Joint Declaration:

- **Emissions Trading**

Context: The success of a sustainable climate and energy initiative rests on the development of robust market-based incentives, such as cap-and-trade emissions programs. Germany’s lessons with the “European Emissions Trading Program” can inform Virginia’s efforts to link to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the Southern Governors Association climate initiative, and the U.S. Congress efforts to develop a national-level greenhouse gas emissions trading program. Special attention is required on the application of revenues to support the development of renewable energies.

Action: We should work together to exchange data and best practices about emissions trading system and the potential “linking” to a new U.S. system at the federal level. The goal of this cooperation should be to organize an emissions trading system on both sides of the Atlantic. This information should be shared with Virginia’s Congressional delegation for consideration in federal climate change legislation.

- **Renewable Energy**

Context: Germany is a leader in the production of renewable energies, including solar photovoltaic, geothermal, and wind.

Action: We should work together to develop and apply renewable energy technologies that promote economic development and sustainable energy. Germany and Virginia should work specifically to explore the development and application of solar photovoltaic, offshore wind, and geothermal energy. Germany should provide Virginia with information about environmental impact methodologies and assessments for offshore wind production.

- **Exchanging Policies that Integrate Economic Development, Energy and Climate Planning**

Context: According to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Germany and Virginia share extraordinarily strong commercial relations. Some 140 German companies have located in Virginia, creating over 13,000 jobs and \$3.5 billion in investment. Germany is the second largest export destination for Virginia's products and services.

Action: We should work together to create new economic development opportunities for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and low-carbon technologies. This should be performed by exchange of information on current developments and trends about the environmental and energy sectors, inter alia at trade fairs and meetings of high-level delegations.

- **Community Energy Planning**

Context: Local authorities in both countries are working to integrate energy efficiency, retrofit buildings, apply renewable energies, develop public transit within large-scale geographically defined boundaries and create quantifiable energy and emissions metrics that guide regional and local climate and energy policies – also referred to as community energy planning.

Action: Starting in Northern Virginia, we should work together to improve the exchange and application of best practices on community energy planning policies by practitioners, and policymakers between Germany and Virginia. Germany could provide Virginia with community contacts for recent information on, inter alia, best practices case studies and methodologies for quantifying performance benchmarks in existing community energy plans in German cities and regions, if applicable.

- **Science and Technology**

Context: The Commonwealth of Virginia and the Federal Republic of Germany are recognized leaders in the use of science, technical innovations, and applied environmental research to address climate and energy policies. Virginia and Germany's vocational training are also recognized as pioneers.

Action: We should work with advanced research institutions such as Virginia Tech's clean combustion laboratory and the Deutsches Zentrum fuer Luft- und Raumfahrt to promote collaboration on clean combustion technologies. Germany could provide information and best practices case studies about passive building standards, which could be shared with the Virginia Community College System and the Commonwealth's four-year universities to assist in the development of state-sponsored green job curriculum. Virginia could share completed curriculum materials with German counterparts.

- **Adaptation**


Context: Both Germany and Virginia are vulnerable to damages resulting from e.g. intense storm and flood events, sea-level rise and water shortages. Due to climate change, the frequency and extent of those events might increase.

Action: We intend to build on existing knowledge on adaptation to climate change. Therefore, the exchange of information and approaches on sustainable climate adaptation policies and actions including public awareness will be fostered.

This Joint Declaration is signed at Washington, D.C., on April 28, 2009, in two originals in the English language.

For the Federal Republic of Germany

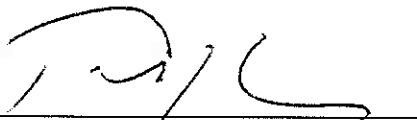
The Federal Minister for the Environment,
Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety



Sigmar Gabriel
Date: 28.4.2009

For the Commonwealth of Virginia

The Governor of Virginia



Timothy M. Kaine
Date: 4/28/09