

## Strengthening Alignment on State and Territory Climate Priorities

**Background:** During the May 2023 GO teams meeting, states identified shared obstacles and strategies to better align efforts across the executive branch, state legislature, and stakeholders in advancing state climate actions.

This document summarizes the session's key takeaways and questions for GO team members to consider going forward.

### Legislative and Executive Branch

While GO teams were divided into breakout groups based on their state's climate policy dynamics, several common challenges were identified across the political spectrum:

- **Cooperation:** Legislatures might hinder progress on climate action or have other policy priorities, like economic growth or healthcare
- **Resources:** States did not have adequate staffing and financial resources to implement priority policies and programs
- **Knowledge:** Legislatures can be unaware of their state's climate challenges and/or unfamiliar with the time and budget necessary for climate action
- **Implementation:** Bills do not appropriate adequate funding and time to implement the climate policies and programs with the urgency that is needed.

### Fostering alignment

From this discussion, recommended actions were shared to address each challenge. This came from both brainstormed ideas, and actions that some governor's offices have already adopted in their states.

- Foster broad coalitions among stakeholders and sectors
- Utilize message framing that underscores the non-partisan nature of climate policies
- Explore external funding avenues to bolster resources
- Collaborate with legislators and stakeholders to draft bills
- Progress policies via executive orders where feasible
- Leverage partner organizations for insightful policy suggestions
- Enhance transparency regarding budget and timeline needs
- Initiate early identification of administrative priorities

### Stakeholders and Executive Branch

A primary area of focus stemming from this discussion, especially in states with significant advocacy communities, is the lack of relationship between advocates and the executive branch. Strengthening this connection is likely a key solution to addressing challenges. The group discussed how stakeholders can successfully influence legislative climate outcomes, but often neglect advocating for the necessary levels

of financial and resource support. States with strong advocacy communities often struggle to agree on approaches for climate solutions, with incremental approaches often receiving backlash from stakeholders who would rather see more comprehensive changes. This misalignment creates difficulty in coordinating a plan of action to achieve outcomes.

### Fostering alignment

States shared some of the practices their governor's offices have been taking to increase alignment between stakeholders and the executive branch on the climate agenda.

- Establish regular weekly meetings and other structures for consistent communication
- Advocate for legislation that encourages robust community involvement
- Enhance task force diversity through executive appointments
- Collaborate with the environmental justice community to foster coalition among sectors and stakeholders
- Engage stakeholders in analytical discussion
- Support the expansion of research and data gathering

### Remaining Questions

Are there any challenges or potential solutions missing? How can these solutions be more actionable?

- Should future discussions be focused on stakeholder engagement, legislature engagement, or both (where the challenges/solutions overlap)?
- What kind of outputs from these discussions be most useful?
- Is there a role for the Alliance to help deliver on this?