



Model letter to your local or regional government, asking them to sign up to the Covenant of Mayors scheme.

Dear [name of local/regional representative],

I am writing to ask you/[your local government body] to sign up to the European Union's Covenant of Mayors scheme (http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/index_en.html). Signing up would mean pledging to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by at least 29% by 2020. We would be supported in this by a central office, and be able to share best practice with other signatories to the great benefit of our area. If we were to sign up, it would improve not only our local environment and quality of life but also our local economy.

After signing up, we would be helped to complete a baseline emissions inventory to quantify the amount of carbon dioxide our region emits due to energy consumption. Once that has been established, we would develop a sustainable energy action plan to reduce our emissions. More details are available on the above website. Implementation of such a plan is one of the ways we can act to save our planet: and the help offered by the Covenant of Mayors would facilitate our transition to a more sustainable energy system.

[Then you could pick from the following arguments, sorted under topic headings, for signing up to the scheme, depending on which you think would be most effective or would like to highlight]:

Economy

- If you are concerned that this would be an unnecessary expense in an unsteady economic period, it is worth noting that signing up to the Covenant of Mayors would also bring a substantial economic boost. Whatever policies might be implemented under the sustainable energy action plan would create local work, attract expertise, and bring money to the local area, whether it be efficiency measures such as installing LED street lamps, or increasing the renewable energy generated in the area.
- For example, Freiburg's reputation as a green city has attracted trade visitors from across the world, and brought money into the local economy.
- Pioneering innovative and forward-looking solutions to climate problems would be of considerably more economic benefit than continuing with unsustainable high-carbon models.
- Having a well-designed energy plan would not just improve our environment and economy, but would make environmental objectives and economic growth mutually reinforcing and thus more sustainable.
- Increasing energy efficiency doesn't just benefit the environment but would also reduce costs for consumers and government. The IPCC has shown that it is possible to build or retrofit very low and zero-energy buildings for little marginal cost - and the costs are paid back in the building's lifetime.
- The finances generated by projects enabled by the Covenant of Mayors (whether through savings, or attracting new businesses and money to the local economy) could help to contribute to improving public services.

Environment/Climate

- The Covenant of Mayors offers our area an opportunity to play a part in combating climate change, which is an issue that needs to be urgently dealt with at all levels. In order to avoid exceeding the 2° Celsius warming limit, action needs to be taken in the next fifteen years. Thus it makes sense to ensure that the money invested in that period is in low-carbon and climate-friendly projects and infrastructure, otherwise those investments and infrastructure projects would contribute to emissions in the long term. Also if an international climate change agreement is agreed, then high-carbon investments and infrastructure will rapidly lose value, or have to be replaced, using more time and money.
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- 80 per cent of energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions come from urban areas, so local authorities like ours can have a significant impact in tackling climate change and carbon emissions
- Since climate change is not a localised problem, acting locally can make a notable difference to improving the global climate. Any reduction in emissions we could achieve locally would also represent a reduction in global emissions.

Energy independence

- Local governments can play a major role as producers and regulators of energy, so it is important to take action against emissions at this level.
- The scheme can also reduce costs by avoiding imported energy, which would also increase energy independence.

Quality of life

- Reducing carbon emissions would significantly increase our quality of life by improving air quality and providing a generally cleaner environment
- For example reducing air pollution would reduce health care costs as it has been estimated that air pollution cost Europe between €59bn and €189bn in 2012 from health (premature deaths and respiratory problems) and environment costs (damage done to buildings, crops, soil and water pollution)

The Covenant of Mayors can support our local projects by offering concrete information, strategic guidance, financial and technical support, help to access EU and private funds, and the Joint Research centre of the European Commission can help with scientific and technical questions. There are over 6,000 signatories in the scheme who can share their ideas, and best practice with us.

There are many innovative ways that areas can take action, and there is no one size fits all sustainable energy action plan, which means that a plan need not be burdensome, but can also be as ambitious as we might like. Size need not be an obstacle - we could sign up individually, or develop an action plan with a number of other authorities. Using natural resources in a smart and sustainable way, and reducing emissions are at the heart of all of them though: whether they focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, public transport schemes or urban development.

The Covenant of Mayors is a bottom-up, participative model, allowing local authorities and people considerable influence and independence, while it is also supported from the top. The more signatories it gains the more effective it will be, and the more positive impact it can have. That is why we should become a signatory of the Covenant, to improve our local economy, environment and quality of life.

Please respond with any questions, or to inform me if **[the local body]** has signed up to the scheme.

Yours sincerely,