

## Climate Legacy Initiative

The Climate Legacy Initiative (CLI) is a collaborative project of Vermont Law School (VLS) and The University of Iowa (UI). Its overall purpose is to research and promote legal doctrines, principles, and rules appropriate for recognition by courts, legislatures, administrative agencies, and private sector institutions to safeguard present and future generations from harms resulting from global climate change. It takes as given that climate change exists; affirms that lawyers have a vital role to play in both public and private discourse and action relative to it; and comprises two phases.

Phase One of the CLI seeks to answer two interdependent questions in particular:

1. What national and international doctrines, principles, and rules of law protect the rights of present and future generations from harms likely to result from global warming?
2. What national and international doctrines, principles, and rules of law establish the duties of current-day actors to protect present and future generations from harms likely to result from global warming?

Answers to these two questions—involving existing and potential US law (federal and state, environmental and non-environmental), tribal/indigenous peoples law, foreign law, natural law, and international environmental and human rights law—are being researched by legal and scientific scholars at VLS' Environmental Law Center (ELC) and Human Rights Initiative (HRI) and at the UI's Center for Human Rights (UICHR) and Center for Global and Environmental Research (CGRER). Culminating in a "white paper" intended for public and private sector policy-makers, Phase One will include also scholarly papers published in VLS and UI law journals, among others. An external "blue ribbon" panel of legal and environmental experts will advise the CLI's activities.

Phase Two of the CLI is planned to implement the legal theories and strategies developed in Phase One. It will concentrate on precedent-setting legislation, litigation, and administration at the local, state, and federal levels; on international agreement-making; and on formal and informal (including media) education and public symposia, among other "outreach" programs. In so doing, it will pay heed to the benefits as well as the harms likely to result from global warming.

Vermont Law School, recognized as having the nation's leading environmental law program, has received a major financial commitment from an anonymous donor to launch the Climate Legacy Initiative. It will administer and coordinate the CLI at least in its first phase

Burns H. Weston, Visiting Distinguished Professor of International Law and Policy at VLS and the Bessie Dutton Murray Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus and Senior Scholar of the UICHR at The University of Iowa, is serving as the CLI's Project Director and Senior Researcher. Professor Tracy Bach of Vermont Law School, specializing in environmental health law, human rights law, and legal method and advocacy skills, is serving as Associate Project Director and Senior Research Fellow of the Initiative.