



RE-AMP Framing in Play

In fall 2014, the RE-AMP Network, in partnership with Minnesota Environmental Partnership and Climate Access, developed a new clean energy and climate frame to help shape Network narratives. Framing is different than messaging. Framing involves developing values-based themes that can be used across policy issues and amplified over time. Frames can be woven into the narratives of many organizations, creating a common voice while still allowing individual stories to emerge.

At its core, the framing strategy recommended moving the availability of clean, affordable energy into the here and now rather than emphasizing a transition off into the future. In summary, the Network frame recommends the following positioning (You can find the full framing guide, along with all other framing resources [here](#)):

- **The Challenge:** The transition to clean, affordable, reliable energy is underway yet is being held back. Communities are paying the price (health, costs, climate impacts).
- **The Choice:** There is a better way. Solutions are here, viable, and affordable. It's time to remove the barriers and promote access to the choices people want.
- **The Opportunity:** Community prosperity. Good, safe, rewarding jobs. Health and security.

Climate Access has been helping RE-AMP members apply the framing guidance and while a full analysis of the adoption and impact has not been done, we did follow up with a handful of members in the middle of 2015 and at the end of the year did a quick scan of their web content and media coverage to see how the organizations have been using the recommendations over time. Here is a quick summary of some of the key places where the RE-AMP framing came into play.

OHIO

When we spoke with Trish Dementer at the Ohio Environmental Council, she noted that the state-specific recommendations (a new feature in the updated framing guide) were particularly useful. In Ohio's case, given setbacks in energy efficiency and renewable energy standards, the recommendation was to focus on the need to "get Ohio back on track" because the transition to clean energy is underway; as well as to focus on specific examples of how Ohio benefits from clean energy and what Ohio lost by putting barriers to innovation in place. The polling and framing guidance was shared with and amplified by Ohio Energy Table members as it tapped into the legislative debate underway. Here are some examples of framing in play.

"Ohio needs a 21st-century energy strategy that embraces innovation and investment. We have the potential to diversify the state's portfolio, create jobs, and ensure reliability and affordability. Unfortunately, a legislative committee is poised to move Ohio backwards."
 Josh Knights, Nature Conservancy Ohio.

“According to “Clean Jobs Ohio,” a report by the national nonpartisan business group Environmental Entrepreneurs, about 89,000 people currently work in Ohio’s clean-energy economy. At the energy-efficiency company I founded in Dayton, we employ 19 good, hardworking Ohioans. But harmful state policies such as the freezing of our clean-energy standards under Senate Bill 310, threaten these jobs. Misguided policies also mean Ohio will continue to lose out to other states that are actively implementing stronger clean-energy policies. That’s why I stand with the governor and urge the legislature to get Ohio’s clean-energy policies back on track. For the sake of our economy, we can’t afford to wait.” Greg Smith, President & CEO, Energy Optimizers USA

“Those (clean energy) jobs are not a thing of the future. They are here and now and growing our economy,” said Gail Parson of E2.

The same themes emerged throughout the year. Here are a few examples:

- Trish Dementer from OEC on **clean energy innovation opportunities** for Ohio and the multiple benefits of carbon reductions.
- Jack Shaner from the Ohio Environmental Council on the Clean Power Plan.

“The reality is there is a worldwide march toward clean energy, the urgency of which is justified by science, by public health and by new economic opportunities,” Shaner said.

MINNESOTA

As a core project partner, **Minnesota Environmental Partnership** embraced the framing recommendations including using “clean energy is available here and now” as the lead into their **clean energy work**.

The recommendations were also put to the test by Sierra Club and the Union of Concerned Scientists through Beyond Coal TV spots that highlight how Minnesota is importing harmful coal rather than investing in home grown energy and that utilities and coal interests are holding back progress. The **news article**, which features the ads, also mentions the RE-AMP/MEP candidate polling conducted in summer 2014.

Fresh Energy uses the framing guide as an ongoing reference to check messaging and remind policy staff of the framing direction to use. Themes in use include focusing on **Minnesota’s past leadership** on climate and energy issues and **opportunities to do more**, and on illuminating who is driving and benefiting from the **transformation to clean energy**.

IOWA

The Iowa Environmental Council has embraced the ‘here and now’ framing approach in its organizational and campaign communication (i.e. **Iowa Environmental Council - Clean Energy**).

Given Iowa’s position as a national leader on wind energy, an emerging regional leader on solar energy, and its long history on energy efficiency, the framing fits well. IEC’s clean

energy messaging affirms that the transition to clean energy is already underway, identifies the achievements and benefits from clean energy to date, and explores the enormous untapped potential (and corresponding benefits) for more wind, solar, and efficiency. Iowa's wind energy leadership is frequently the starting point for the conversation and IEC emphasizes benefits using specific examples such as job growth, payments to landowners, and low energy costs to emphasize the opportunity for Iowa has only just begun.

Examples of framing recommendations in play include:

- Applauding leadership and using competitiveness to spur more action (i.e. Iowa is beating California in wind production and rises in the Midwest solar ranks).

- o Iowa moves up in Wind Rankings
- o Iowa Rises in Midwest Solar Ranks

- Removing the barriers and improving access to clean energy.

"Iowa is a national wind energy leader, solar has been gaining momentum in recent years, and both have significant potential for continued growth in the state. However, to facilitate growth and reap the many environmental, economic and community benefits of clean energy, Iowa must create policies and practices that encourage a transition to clean energy. This includes improving access and removing barriers – two priorities for the Council."

- o Clearing Barriers to Clean Energy
- o A Win for Solar Energy in Iowa

- Emphasizing benefits.

- o Report Finds Clean Power Plan will Boost Iowa Economy, Create Jobs
- o Clean Power Plan: An Opportunity for Iowa
- o Amplifying Iowa's Wind Power

- Finally, IEC focused on using the framing and messaging around the final Clean Power Plan release in August 2015, including messages highlighting that the 'full benefits of clean energy have yet to be realized' and the opportunity for the CPP to 'accelerate progress' and leverage Iowa's 'wind advantage.' We also encouraged partner groups to adopt similar messaging approaches. A good example of the resulting coverage is from a front page Des Moines Register article with this excerpt:

"Baer, who leads the Iowa Environmental Council's energy program, said Iowa benefits in multiple ways from the plan: Iowa can grow wind energy to meet the state's new goals as well as sell wind energy to other states that need help meeting their requirements. And Iowa's wind manufacturing industry should see increased demand for turbines, blades and towers. 'Iowa is a good example of a state where the transition is already underway to clean energy,' he said.

"The Clean Power Plan can strengthen and accelerate that transition in the coming years." Others agreed.

● TIPS & TOOLS

“In Iowa, we are blessed with abundant clean sources of energy like the wind and the sun,” said Susan Guy, executive director of Iowa Interfaith Power & Light. “The Clean Power Plan will not only reduce the amount of harmful carbon pollution that is being emitted, but also serve to further drive innovation in clean energy that will be good for jobs and rural economies in our state.”

“Iowa’s technical potential for solar energy is enormous and it provides significant economic benefits,” said Tim Dwight, president of the Iowa Solar Energy Trade Association. “Last year, solar energy employed 900 Iowans and supports nearly 50 Iowa businesses.” The plan “will encourage more growth while keeping valuable dollars and jobs in our state.”

As RE-AMP continues to track and improve the communication capacity of the network, RE-AMP members with examples of framing in play (including what’s not working) are invited to send them to RE-AMP’s Community Manager Jessica Conrad at Jessica@reamp.org.