

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change and LULUCF

This presentation consists of three parts: A description of the Pew Center, a brief history of LULUCF in the climate change negotiations coupled with an explanation of gross-net and net-net accounting, and a presentation of why net-net accounting and full use of LULUCF will be important in a U.S. domestic policy and for many developing countries.

Part I

The Pew Center, which strives to advance policy formation to address climate change, is a somewhat unique organization. This is a result of its original conception: to work with business and industry to tackle the problem. By having both an independent research arm and an industry-business arm, the credibility of our messages is greatly enhanced.

The Center contracts with experts in the scientific and academic communities to publish papers on topics in a range of areas: economics, domestic policy, international issues, and solutions. The Center also actively engages in international and domestic meetings and employs media opportunities to get information about climate change to the general public.

Part II

Tensions between advocates of focusing on reductions in fossil fuel emissions and advocates of taking emissions and removals due to the terrestrial biosphere fully into account lie at the heart of the international negotiating process.

The Kyoto Protocol elected to utilize gross-net accounting in incorporating LULUCF into the international policy instrument. This approach leads, through the need to restrict the use of LULUCF, to complications in accounting systems. It also fails to tally some of the emissions that atmospheric conditions will reflect.

Ultimately tensions over this issue were one cause of the breakdown of COP6, providing the opportunity for the U.S. to withdraw from the international process.

Part III

The U.S. is likely, for a range of reasons, to include a full range of LULUCF activities in any domestic climate change mitigation policies. It is also likely to include full use of LULUCF activities in developing countries to offset domestic emissions. This is in stark contrast to the Protocol, which at present only allows use of afforestation in the CDM.

Although at present many developing countries do not favor use of their lands to assist the developed world in dealing with climate change, as these countries gain a better understanding of the benefits to them of LULUCF projects, this attitude may change. In particular, the use of agricultural soil carbon, as it results in improvements in yields and remediation of degraded and desertified lands, supports many high priority goals of these countries.