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Third Planet and Concept Communiqués make recommendations to the Florida Energy Commission

St. Augustine, FL, March 26, 2007 — At the recent Jacksonville meeting of the Florida Energy Commission's Climate Change Advisory Group and again at the Orlando meeting of the full Florida Energy Commission, Robert Farmer, a St. Augustine-based energy engineer and climate change specialist, presented recommendations to establish official State public communications on the climate change issue. Mr. Farmer is president of Third Planet, a non-profit organization focusing climate change education and president of Concept Communiqués, Inc., a public relations and corporate communications agency with a particular focus on communications related to climate change.

Citing growing public awareness of the effects of climate change, Mr. Farmer pointed out the public is becoming increasingly concerned and feeling quite isolated and helpless because they have so few avenues for addressing the problem, "short of changing light bulbs."

"This year the urgency has ramped up considerably with the release of the science report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in February, and I can confidently predict that it will rise several more notches with the IPCC report on *Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* to be released in less than 3 weeks (April 2-5, Brussels). This report will have particular resonance for Florida.

The IPCC will follow with their report on *Mitigation* (May 5, Bangkok). Here we will learn their recommendations for reducing the amount of carbon we are pumping into the atmosphere. The solutions, whether reducing carbon emissions or adapting infrastructure and responses for an uncertain future, are not easy and the public will be guided and influenced greatly by information appearing in the media."

As with every other State, our responses will be unique to Florida's geography, natural resources and demographics, and it is important that the public not be left solely to the popular press for their education.

"While there *are* important personal actions that everyone should take, in the overall scheme these will have little impact unless the public becomes fully involved in the problem solving process," said Mr. Farmer. "I believe there exists an immediate need for an authoritative State voice to ease public concerns, to enlighten, to guide, and to engage public interest as an integral and critical part of the solution. This is a function that must be performed by the State because our universities, non-profit organizations and the press cannot deliver these essential services with adequate authority."

Mr. Farmer recommended that a Public Information Office on Climate Change be created in the Executive Office of the Governor. He suggested that among its responsibilities, “the office will present climate mitigation recommendations and guidance to the public; make available credible information on the range of challenges and potential solutions being faced by Florida and Floridians in this emerging problem; and, post meeting announcements about climate change discussions taking place throughout the state by all concerned interest groups.”

In the latter activity he recommends the Office should function as a statewide forum to encourage the creation of local and county community planning groups. “These local groups would identify, study and understand the climate change problems directly impacting their own communities.”

“An enlightened and engaged public is critical to the success of a State climate change and energy security plan. It’s vital we begin this process today.”

Mr. Farmer, an experienced power systems engineer, is an accredited observer to the meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through Third Planet, and was an accredited delegate to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. He served on the Energy Advisory Committee of the Governor’s Commission for a Sustainable South Florida (1996-97) and is a member of the Climate and Energy Specialist Working Group of the World Conservation Union’s Commission on Environmental Law (IUCN CEL CESG). He served on the Board of the Southeast Florida Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) for over a decade.

St. Augustine-based Third Planet is a registered non-profit operating foundation established in 1999. Concept Communiqués, Inc. is a registered Florida corporation established in 1989. Until August 2006, the organizations were located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

For more information, please visit www.thethirdplanet.org and www.conceptcommuniques.com or call (904) 810-0789.

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