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New York Public Radio Listeners Love Cap and Trade

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Part of the irrational fear of Cap and Trade is based on the idea that some Wall Street Fat Cats (or Al Gore) will make out like bandits selling derivatives in carbon certificates. So I bet you never imagined that the most popular pledge gift for public radio subscribers would turn out to be... retired carbon certificates!

WAMC in Albany New York was given 600 carbon certificates to give listeners who called in and pledged their support for the radio station with a \$100 pledge. They imagined would make for a rather dull pledge gift. After all, everybody disapproves of Cap and Trade, and nobody understands it.

So imagine the surprise of the station manager when not only were carbon certificates more popular than Pete Seeger albums, but they actually drew pledges up to \$1,000!

“We were inundated with telephone calls,” is how the station manager described it. “Some people wanted one for each grandchild.”

The carbon credits were donated by the Adirondack Council a local environmental organization. It bought the carbon certificates at the first US Cap and Trade program - the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. popularly known as Reggie (RGGI) it sets a ceiling on carbon emissions from utilities in New York and nine other Northeastern states.

Under Cap and Trade, utilities must pay to pollute, and there is a ceiling or “cap” on the total regional carbon pollution allowed. By buying and retiring the finite number of carbon certificates available, pressure is exerted on utilities to clean up.

The group retires the allowances so they can never be used to create carbon dioxide emissions.

The money they paid goes to a fund operated by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, which issues grants for energy conservation and clean energy development.

As the number of available allowances is reduced, that pressures utilities to invest in energy efficiency, add combined heat & power to their plants (to dilute pollution per kwh produced) or switch to lower polluting fuel like natural gas, or to pollution-free energy like solar or wind power.