

“Who’s Getting on the Sustainability Train and Why?”

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This paper examines the speed and diffusion of local level energy and climate protection policies as a basis for explaining why sustainability actions have been taken by some local governments. Our analysis of the extent and kinds of sustainability practices that local governments have adopted is based on the ICMA Local Government Sustainability Policies and Programs survey conducted in 2010. The results show that there have been some leaders in developing and adopting broad-ranging sustainability strategies at the local level, but most local governments have been slow to adopt most of the practices. The paper will examine patterns in the choices of sustainability practices made by local governments and relate these to governmental and community characteristics and the level of priority assigned by the jurisdiction to a range of policy goals related to sustainability.