

## Grijalva named to board of group fighting global warming

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A Tucson-based environmental group has recruited U.S. Rep. Raúl Grijalva in its fight against global warming.

The Center for Biological Diversity asked Grijalva to be on the advisory board of its new San Francisco-based Climate Law Institute, which aims to spur carbon emission reductions, get the government to enforce environmental laws and spread the word about climate change, said center Executive Director Kieran Suckling.

“That’s the first time we’ve asked a politician to join an advisory board,” Suckling said. “We want to increase our presence and influence in Washington, because that’s where all of the important decisions are being made.”

Grijalva, who serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources, agreed to serve because he wants to be connected to climate change issues, said his spokeswoman Natalie Luna. “So we can stay as aware as possible of climate change and how it’s going to affect us,” Luna said.

Kassie Siegel, a center attorney who wrote the petition to get the polar bear on the endangered species list, will lead the institute. The center considered basing the institute in Washington, D.C., but settled on San Francisco.

“We really thought it was important to have the headquarters in the West, because the West is ground zero for global warming,” Suckling said.

Grijalva, who was on President Obama’s short list to be Interior secretary, is among eight people on the advisory board.

A key institute goal will be the reduction of carbon emissions until the atmospheric CO2 level dips below 350 parts per million, a reduction of roughly 11 percent. To accomplish that the United States needs to become a “carbon absorber” by reducing emissions more than 100 percent, Suckling said.

The idea for a climate law center came during the center’s battle to list the polar bear - threatened by dwindling polar ice - as endangered, Suckling said.



Grijalva. Citizen file photo

“That led us to fully realize that hundreds of species are threatened with extinction due to global warming,” he said. “We didn’t have an adequate infrastructure to deal with that.”

The initial \$6.3 million for the institute came from a handful of major donors, including the California Community Foundation, The Sandler Foundation and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. The Center for Biological Diversity has pledged to fund \$10 million more over the next five years.