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### Eastern states in the US team up to reduce power plant CO<sub>2</sub>

After 2 years of collaboration, nine northeastern states in the USA have agreed to reduce power plant emissions in the region to 10% of current levels by 2020. On August 24, 2005 the *New York Times* obtained and reported on a confidential draft proposal for the regional initiative, which is (according to the newspaper) the first such cooperative regulatory action in the history of the United States. Although the proposal is not finalized, the *New York Times* interviewed a state official who said, "We have very high hopes of getting a resolution through to all the states by the end of September."

California, Washington and Oregon are exploring a similar regional agreement that, together with the northeastern states' agreement, may exert considerable pressure on the federal government to change their position on greenhouse gas control.

Travis Hudson  
American Geological Institute  
Alexandria, VA, USA

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### Unprecedented view from NASA satellites

In December 2005, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced that their satellite data have now created the most detailed map ever produced of the Antarctic continent. Called the

Mosaic of Antarctica, this map yields an unprecedented view of surface features showing subtle changes of slope and will provide revealing information on the changes in the continent's massive ice sheets and glaciers. The Mosaic map has been created from images from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectrometer onboard NASA's Terra and Aqua satellites and is the result of a partnership between NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center; the University of Colorado's National Snow and Ice Data Center; and the University of New Hampshire, Durham.

A second map that is announced to be released early in 2006 will also yield the most accurate topographical survey of Antarctic ever undertaken. Over 65 million points were surveyed from space by the Geoscience Laser Altimeter System orbiting on NASA's Ice, Cloud and Land Elevation Satellite (ICESat).

Using the Mosaic map together with the Canadian satellite, RADARSAT, is seen as a breakthrough combination because the Mosaic of Antarctica eliminates terrain distortion, showing snow and rock surface almost perfectly and the RADARSAT reveals some of the features below the snow. NSIDC plans to distribute both this "digital elevation model" and the Mosaic map in compatible formats.

The Mosaic map is available through a user-friendly zoom-in Web interface that brings together previous maps, such as those from RADARSAT, with new data in different contrast settings that accentuate features that are difficult to see. The Mosaic of Antarctica can be accessed at the NSIDC's Web site: <http://www.nsidc.org/data/moa/index.html>

Anne Marie de Grosbois  
Assistant Editor

