

ADOPTED
RESOLUTION NO. 2016-237

Urging United States Congress to Pass Carbon Fee and Dividend Legislation

WHEREAS, climate scientists worldwide are in near-unanimous agreement that the planet Earth is warming rapidly and to a degree that is perilous to human civilization, to numerous species, and to the global ecosystem, and

WHEREAS, human activity is a significant contributor to global warming, especially through the accelerating combustion of fossil fuels that create carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as a byproduct, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature has a record of acknowledging the reality of climate change as well as the County's responsibility to reduce its contribution to the causes of global warming, as evidenced by the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan, Tompkins County Energy Roadmap, Tompkins County Energy Strategy, and numerous greenhouse gas emissions inventories and climate action plans, and

WHEREAS, a prompt and major shift away from fossil fuels is a necessary cornerstone to any meaningful response to climate change, and

WHEREAS, a steadily increasing fee on fossil fuels at the point of their entry into the economy would be straightforward and make effective use of free-market mechanisms to promote the transition to greater energy conservation and renewable sources of energy, and

WHEREAS, this revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend is an effective method to reduce carbon emissions for the following reasons:

- 1) The fee would motivate everyone to conserve and adopt renewable energy without the need for extensive governmental regulatory controls or infrastructure, encouraging consumers and the market to replace consumption of carbon-based energy with innovative, sustainable energy sources, whether by being more efficient or choosing other, less carbon intensive energy sources;
- 2) The fee would employ a market approach to encourage innovative processes, not only in energy production, but also in every field in which energy is consumed, e.g. electric cars, mass transportation, architectural planning and construction, water heating, lighting, and air conditioning in residential and commercial buildings;
- 3) Levying the fee at the point of production would be more efficient, less expensive and provide more accurate signals than would doing so at the point of consumption;
- 4) The fee would incentivize the development and use of alternative energies and attendant technologies, eliminating the need for government subsidies that attempt to forecast alternative energy winners and losers;
- 5) Because the fee is levied on the same basis on all businesses, it is fairer to every business and easier to administer than alternatives, such as a cap and trade system;
- 6) A border adjustment would assess a fee on goods traded with countries without a comparable carbon price, thereby maintaining the competitiveness of US businesses and discouraging relocation to such countries, and

WHEREAS, such a policy would protect lower and middle-income households, as the dividend would allow more than 70% of American households to benefit financially, break even, or have only minimal increased costs (<0.2% income) from this policy; the policy would also create jobs, as the dividend puts money back into local economies, and

WHEREAS, further delay in responding to this crisis increases the risk of catastrophic climate change,

