

RESOLUTION 15-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE RIDGWAY TOWN COUNCIL URGING THE U.S. CONGRESS TO PASS LEGISLATION THAT LEVIES AN ANNUALLY INCREASING REVENUE- NEUTRAL FEE ON THE CARBON IN FOSSIL FUELS AT THE POINT OF PRODUCTION AND IMPORTATION.

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, the primary cause of the rapid warming is human activity, especially through the accelerating combustion of fossil fuels that create carbon dioxide as a byproduct; and

WHEREAS, the newly-released 2014 Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ("IPCC") has reinforced these findings, especially the extent of human agency in causing climate change, to include:

1. Atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have increased to levels unprecedented in the last 800,000 years with carbon dioxide concentrations having increased by 40% since pre-industrial times;
2. It is extremely likely (95 - 100%) that more than half of the observed increases in global average surface temperatures from 1951 to 2010 were caused by the manmade increase in greenhouse gas concentrations and other anthropogenic forces;
3. Every additional release of greenhouse gases diminishes the planet Earth's chances of avoiding catastrophic climate change; and

WHEREAS, the United States Global Change Research Program, in its 2014 National Climate Assessment, makes this statement about climate change in the Southwestern United States: "Increased heat, drought, and insect outbreaks, all linked to climate change, have increased wildfires. Declining water supplies, reduced agricultural yields, health impacts in cities due to heat, and flooding and erosion in coastal areas are additional concerns"¹; and

WHEREAS, the Ridgway Town Council has a record of acknowledging the reality of climate change, its probable effects on the Town, and the Town's ability and responsibility to reduce its contribution to the causes of climate change, as evidenced by the Town's support of and adoption of Prescriptive Energy and Green Building Codes; and

WHEREAS, the urgent need to transition from fossil fuels can best be accomplished with a

¹ <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/highlights/regions/southwest>

market-based program, namely a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend; and

WHEREAS, such an instrument would encourage consumers and the market to replace their consumption of carbon based energy with innovative energy sources, whether by being more efficient or by choosing other, less carbon intensive energy sources; and

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

1. The fee would motivate everyone to conserve and to adopt renewable energy without the need for extensive governmental regulatory controls or infrastructure;
2. The fee would employ a free market approach to encourage innovative processes, not only in energy production, but also in every other 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 price signals than would doing so at the points 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; and

WHEREAS, further delay in responding to this crisis increases the risk of catastrophic climate change, imminently threatens low lying coastal areas and land and sea species, threatens water supplies, increases the frequency of severe weather events, increases the cost of undertaking adequate responses, and increases risks to the global economy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF RIDGWAY that the Town Council recognizes the pollution caused by humans burning fossil fuels is recognized by scientists as a primary cause of climate change, and that a necessary measure to address this problem is the enactment of a revenue-neutral fee on carbon production at its source, with the fees being returned to Americans as a dividend.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council:

1. Strongly urges the U.S Congress to pass legislation that levies an annually increasing revenue neutral fee on the carbon in fossil fuels at the point of production and importation, that would be sufficient to:
 - a. Encourage individuals and corporations to produce and use less fossil fuels;
 - b. Make the transition from fossil fuels less onerous to consumers and to the economy

by returning to Americans on an equitable basis all of the revenues gained from the fee;

- c. Reduce US CO2-equivalent emissions to 10% of 1990 levels by 2050;
- d. Encourage similar actions by other nations trading with the United States, by suitable carbon-content-based fees for imports and rebates for exports to nations that have not taken such actions.

2. Requests that the U.S. Congress construct and implement this policy with the speed appropriate to the gravity and urgency of the situation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk is directed to forward a copy of this resolution to the Town's Congressional Delegation.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 9th day of September, 2015.

TOWN OF RIDGWAY

By



John I. Clark, Mayor

ATTEST:

By



Karen Christian, Deputy Town Clerk