

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-50
RESOLUTION OF THE MARIN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ENACT A REVENUE-NEUTRAL
CARBON FEE AND DIVIDEND

WHEREAS, the average surface temperature on Earth has been increasing steadily, with the sixteen warmest years ever recorded all occurring since 1998, and the hottest of all was 2016; and

WHEREAS, climate scientists overwhelmingly agree that an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere — carbon dioxide (CO₂) in particular — is causing the increase in global temperature and sea level rise, and that the primary cause of the substantial and continuing increase of CO₂ in the atmosphere is from burning carbon-based fossil fuels — coal, oil, and natural gas; and

WHEREAS, in May, 2016, the global atmospheric concentration of CO₂ reached 410 parts per million — the highest level in the last 800,000 years. It is predicted that, by 2100, the average global temperature will be 2°F to 11.5°F higher than now, depending on the level of future greenhouse gases trapped in the atmosphere ; and

WHEREAS, climate change caused by global warming-related greenhouse gas emissions, including CO₂, is already leading to large-scale problems including ocean acidification and rising sea levels; more frequent, extreme, and damaging weather events such as heat waves, storms, heavy rainfall and flooding, and droughts; more frequent and intense wildfires; disrupted ecosystems affecting biodiversity and food production; and an increase in heat-related deaths; and

WHEREAS, because CO₂ remains in the atmosphere for approximately one hundred years, we are approaching a dangerous greenhouse gas threshold whereby, if crossed, humans will no longer be able to influence the course of future global warming, as tropical forests, peat bogs, permafrost, and the oceans, which absorb and sequester carbon in a balanced state, will begin releasing additional carbon into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, the relentless increase in global atmospheric CO₂ concentration requires broader, more powerful policies to supplement local and regional efforts to reduce emissions; and

WHEREAS, there are embedded human health costs due to pollutants released by burning fossil fuels that cause lung disease, respiratory illnesses, and cancer; and

WHEREAS, the environmental, health, and social costs of CO₂ emissions are not currently included in prices paid for fossil fuels, but rather these externalized costs are borne both directly and indirectly by all American and global citizens; and

WHEREAS, a national carbon tax on fossil fuels, based on the amount of CO₂ the fuel will emit when burned, will begin to correct this market failure; and

WHEREAS, enacting a national carbon tax would make the United States a leader in mitigating climate change and in the clean energy technologies of the 21st Century, and would

incentivize other countries to enact similar carbon taxes, reducing global CO2 emissions without the need for complex international agreements; and

WHEREAS, a national carbon tax, starting at a relatively low rate and increasing steadily over future years, is a market-based solution that would minimally disrupt the economy while sending a clear and predictable price signal to businesses to develop and use non-carbon-based energy resources; and

WHEREAS, a national carbon tax would incentivize manufacturers, businesses, and consumers throughout the economy to produce and use less fossil fuel, and would spur investment in and deployment of clean energy resources and energy efficient processes, without favoring any particular technology, and would thereby reduce CO2 emissions into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, job creation from development of clean energy and energy efficiency businesses would exceed job creation from further development of fossil fuel businesses, and would promote worker retraining for those employed in the fossil fuel industries; and

WHEREAS, if 100% of carbon tax revenue is returned to households in equal shares, approximately two-thirds of Americans will break even or come out ahead, as their dividends match or exceed direct and indirect price increases due to the tax, protecting lower and middle income households; and

WHEREAS, for efficient administration, fossil fuels can be taxed once, as far upstream in the economy as practical, or at the port of entry into the United States; and

WHEREAS, border adjustments levied on carbon-based products imported from countries without comparable carbon pricing and refunds to our exporters will help level the playing field and maintain the competitiveness of U.S. businesses in global markets; and

WHEREAS, a national carbon tax can be implemented quickly and efficiently, and respond to the urgency of the climate crisis, because the federal government already has in place mechanisms, such as the Internal Revenue Service, needed to implement and enforce the tax, and already collects taxes from fossil fuel producers and importers; and

WHEREAS, the goals of a national carbon tax to reduce CO2 emissions and transition to a green economy are consistent with state and local programs designed to mitigate climate change, such as California's AB32 and the County of Marin's Climate Action Plan and adaptation initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the market incentive provided by a steadily rising national carbon tax implemented in 2017 can result in significant and increasing near-term reductions in overall U.S. CO2 emissions, and thereby help Marin County meet or exceed its own goals; and

WHEREAS, continued widespread use of fossil fuels and global climate change pose a present and growing risk to the health and welfare of Marin County residents and to its economy, and a U.S. national, revenue-neutral carbon tax will significantly mitigate those risks and promote health and prosperity in Marin, our region, and the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Marin County Board of Supervisors urges the United States Congress to enact, without delay, a revenue-neutral fee on carbon-based fossil fuels; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the tax should be collected once, as far upstream in the economy as practical, or at the port of entry into the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the tax rate should start low and increase steadily and predictably; and

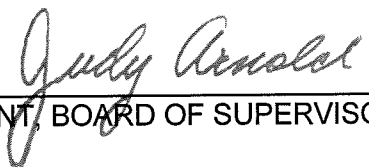
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all tax revenue should be returned to households to protect low and middle income Americans from the impact of rising prices due to the tax; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the international competitiveness of U. S. businesses should be protected by using border tariffs and tax refunds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, while supporting a fee on carbon and dividend distribution, this Board's support rests entirely on the continued regulatory authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), continued implementation of the Clean Power Act, and the people's ongoing access to federal and state tort liability.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin held on this 23rd day of May, 2017, by the following vote:

AYES: SUPERVISORS Dennis Rodoni, Katie Rice, Damon Connolly, Kathrin Sears,
Judy Arnold
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: NONE



PRESIDENT, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST:



CLERK