

**TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

RESOLUTION #17-235

**RESOLUTION URGING THE U.S. CONGRESS TO ADDRESS
GLOBAL WARMING BY ENACTING REVENUE-NEUTRAL
CARBON FEE AND DIVIDEND LEGISLATION**

WHEREAS, overwhelming scientific evidence exists that human releases of greenhouse gases, especially CO₂ from the burning of fossil fuels, are warming the Earth's atmosphere and oceans and causing sea-level rise, loss of glaciers and sea ice, and alterations to weather systems; and

WHEREAS, Earth's 2016 surface temperatures were the warmest since modern recordkeeping began in 1880, according to NASA and NOAA, and 2016 was the third year in a row to set a new temperature record; and

WHEREAS, the global atmospheric concentration of CO₂ has now surpassed 400 parts per million; and conservative scientific models estimate that to achieve climate stabilization and avoid dangerous climate change, emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) must be brought to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050; and

WHEREAS, recent research results indicate that global warming appears to be destabilizing polar ice caps, leading to increased rates of ice melt, which could trigger sea level rise beyond the high end of previous estimates, perhaps on the order of a meter or more within the next 50 years; and

WHEREAS, as a coastal state, New Jersey is especially vulnerable to sea level rise and resultant flooding of coastal areas, and is also exposed to threats to infrastructure and to agriculture and to increased risk of droughts, inland floods, heat stress episodes, wildfires, and loss of species from global warming; and

WHEREAS, Hopewell Township is committed to preserving its environment and human welfare and has put major effort into becoming more sustainable, but despite its best efforts to promote sustainability, preserve wildlife and the environment, and protect the health of residents, life within the Township cannot be sustainable if the State, the Nation, and the Earth itself are not on a sustainable trajectory; and

WHEREAS, the environmental, health, and social costs of carbon emissions are not included in prices paid for fossil fuels, but rather these externalized costs are borne by all persons without their consent; and

WHEREAS, to begin to correct this market failure, Congress can impose a national carbon fee on the extraction, production, or importation of fossil fuels, based on the amount of CO₂ the fuel will emit when burned; and

WHEREAS, independent studies, including two recent efforts by Regional Economic Modeling, Inc., and the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Tax Analysis, estimate that a carbon fee that starts at a low rate and increases steadily, the proceeds of which are refunded to citizens, except for modest administrative costs, would significantly reduce carbon emissions without harming the economy and would actually benefit lower- and middle-income Americans, and would encourage businesses to develop and use non-carbon based energy sources; and

WHEREAS, a national carbon fee can be implemented quickly and efficiently because the federal government already has agencies in place, such as the Internal Revenue Service, to collect the fee and already collects such from fossil fuel producers and importers. Border tariff adjustments on products imported from countries without carbon pricing, and refunds of carbon fees paid to exporters can maintain the global competitiveness of U.S. businesses; and

WHEREAS, a national carbon fee would make the United States a leader in mitigating climate change and in the clean energy technologies of the 21st Century. Other countries would have the incentive to enact similar carbon fees, reducing global CO2 emissions without the need for further international agreements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hopewell Township Committee urges the U.S. Congress to enact and the President to sign without delay a fee on carbon-based fuels to be collected at a point as close to where those fuels enter the economy as practical; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the fee rate should start low and increase steadily and predictably to achieve the goal of reducing U.S. CO2 emissions to 20% of 1990 levels by 2050; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all revenue, net of administrative costs, should be returned as a dividend to all U.S. households in equal measure.

Date Adopted: July 10, 2017

CERTIFICATION

**I HEREBY CERTIFY THE FOREGOING TO BE
A TRUE COPY OF A *Resolution* ADOPTED
BY THE HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
AT A MEETING HELD**

July 10, 2017

DATE

Laurie E. Gompf

LAURIE E. GOMPF, MUNICIPAL CLERK