

RESOLUTION NO. 6178

RESOLUTION OF BEMIDJI CITY COUNCIL RECOGNIZING CLIMATE CHANGE AND URGING CONGRESS TO LEVY A REVENUE NEUTRAL FEE ON CARBON IN FOSSIL FUELS

WHEREAS, climate scientists worldwide are in near-unanimous agreement that the Earth is warming rapidly which is causing changes in climate that are perilous to the Earth's natural systems and to human civilization; and

WHEREAS, the primary cause of that warming is human activity, especially through the combustion of greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide (CO₂); and

WHEREAS, the continued use of fossil fuels is being supported by a market failure whereby the costs of carbon emissions are not included in the price of fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bemidji, Minnesota, (The Best MN Town) has already acknowledged the importance of taking action toward reducing fossil fuel use through its pledge to the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2007, through its continuing participation in Minnesota GreenStep Cities as a Step 3 City, and through its energy efficiency investments; and

WHEREAS, the urgent need to transition away from fossil fuels can best be accomplished with a market-based program, namely a revenue-neutral carbon fee on fossil fuel producers with a corresponding rebate or dividend to consumers; and

WHEREAS, using a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend to reduce carbon emissions would have the following benefits:

1. The carbon fee would incentivize the development and use of energy efficiency and low carbon energy sources and minimize the need for onerous governmental energy regulations and subsidies that attempt to forecast winners and losers.
2. The transition to low-carbon energy sources will provide a range of additional benefits including enhanced public health, job creation and strengthening of the US economy, increased energy security and increase local energy development in rural areas.
3. Even though a carbon fee would temporarily increase energy costs including electric rates, and the cost of living, those costs would be offset by the revenue returned to households on an equal basis as a dividend such that the bottom 55-60% of households by income would break even or receive more in dividends than they would pay in higher living expenses.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Council of Bemidji, Minnesota, that the Council strongly urges the United States Congress to pass legislation that levies an annually increasing revenue-neutral fee on the carbon in fossil fuels at the point of production or importation that would be sufficient to:

- a) Encourage individuals and businesses 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 equal basis all the revenues gained from the fee;
- c) Reduce U.S. CO₂ emissions to 10% of 1990 levels by 2050;
- d) Encourage similar actions in 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.

Be it further resolved, that the City of Bemidji City Clerk is directed to forward a copy of the resolution to the Cities Congressional Delegation.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Councilmember Hellquist, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Lehmann, was passed by the following vote:

Ayes: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Hellquist, Johnson, Lehmann, Erickson
Nays: Larson
Absent: None

Passed: September 17, 2018

ATTEST:


Michelle R. Miller, City Clerk

APPROVED:


Rita C. Albrecht, Mayor