

ADOPTED
RESOLUTION NO. 2019-24

Urging United States Congress to Pass the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 763)

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, the recently published Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change SR1.5 Report (<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>) states that, "Policies reflecting a high price on emissions are necessary" as a key component of any effort to limit global temperatures increases to 1.5 degree centigrade, and

WHEREAS this IPCC report also suggests that any carbon pricing policy should be designed to, "balance between incentivizing low-carbon behavior and mitigating the adverse distributional consequences of higher energy prices", and

WHEREAS, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 763) has been introduced in Congress and would establish a steadily increasing fee on fossil fuels at the point of their entry into the economy; such a fee 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, the act would return all revenues (minus 3% for administration) to each American as a monthly dividend, to offset expected higher prices for goods and services, 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 also encouraging other countries to price carbon.

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, 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, on recommendation of the Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee, That the Tompkins County Legislature endorses a carbon fee and dividend and urges our representatives in the United States Congress to enact it into law,

RESOLVED, further, That copies of the resolution be sent to President Donald Trump, Vice-President Michael Pence, Governor Andrew Cuomo, Representative Tom Reed, and Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Charles Schumer, New York State Senators James Seward, Thomas O'Mara, and Pamela Helming, New York State Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, and New York State Association of Counties.

SEQR ACTION: Not an action subject to SEQR

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Deborah Dawson, Member
SECONDER:	Anna Kelles, Member
AYES:	Black, Champion, Dawson, Granison, John, Kelles, Klein, Koreman, Lane, McBean-Clairborne, McKenna, Morey, Robertson, Sigler

STATE OF NEW YORK)
) ss:
 COUNTY OF TOMPKINS)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution adopted by the Tompkins County Legislature on February 5, 2019.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the said Legislature at Ithaca, New York, on February 6, 2019.

Catherine Covert, Clerk
 Tompkins County Legislature