

Resolution 3.04 - Omnibus Clean Air Resolution

WHEREAS the National Park system contains 83 million acres of culturally, historically, and naturally significant lands; and

WHEREAS these lands provide critical habitat for many species of plants and animals, are major destinations for families seeking healthful outdoor activities, contain some of America's most inspiring scenic horizons, and protect the symbols of our national heritage; and

WHEREAS today one in three national park units in the National Park System have air pollution levels that exceeds Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) limits; and

WHEREAS the vast majority of the air pollution affecting national parks is the result of the burning of fossil fuels, particularly coal fired power plants; and

WHEREAS air pollution in the national parks degrades habitat for the plants and animals, puts the health of park visitors and staff at risk, causes physical damage to symbols of our heritage, and mars scenic horizons; and

WHEREAS Congress enacted special laws in the 1977 Clean Air Act to achieve the goal of restoring pristine air quality to 156 national parks and other federal lands possessing outstanding natural and scenic qualities; and

WHEREAS nearly 30 years later, the national parks and public health continue to be plagued by harmful air pollution due to legal loopholes in the 1977 Act and due to inadequate enforcement of the 1977 Act; and

WHEREAS air pollution also contributes to public health problems in the U.S. including asthma, heart and lung disease, and developmental delays in children; and

WHEREAS today millions of Americans - more than two in three - live in areas where air pollution exceeds EPA limits, with diverse populations in both urban and rural areas disparately impacted by negative health consequences; and

WHEREAS coal-fired power plants and transportation are leading sources of the pollutants that cause asthma attacks and respiratory disease; and

WHEREAS the Investing in Climate and Protection Act (HR186) a bill introduced in the 110th Congress by Rep. Edward Markey [D, MA-7], would direct the Administrator of the EPA to establish a program to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases; and

WHEREAS the Investing in Climate Protection Act would greatly decrease the number of coal fired power plants through auctionable credits; and

WHEREAS the Investing in Climate Protection Act would utilize revenues from auctions to support lower income families and develop green jobs in the new economy; and

WHEREAS air, water and noise pollution frequently occur in Latino communities and environmental racism plagues our community; and

WHEREAS EPA has disregarded rulings by the Supreme Court that the Clean Air Act requires EPA to regulate Greenhouse Gas Emissions and has instead called for further research; and

1. Therefore, be it resolved that the National Latino Congreso endorses and supports full enforcement of the 1977 Clean Air Act amendments, and the passage of an amended version of the Investing in Climate and Protection Act (HR186) which includes a moratorium on new coal-fired power plants to protect the health of all Americans and to reduce air pollution that harms America's 390 national park units.

2. Therefore, be it resolved that stricter and proven standards reducing air, water and noise pollution is needed. In addition, fees and fines collected by violators of pollution laws should be returned to the communities where the violations occurred.