

National Latino Congreso Resolution 3.2 – Climate Change

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Whereas the United States once led the world in protecting public health through reductions in air pollution, water pollution, toxic wastes, and elimination of the dangerous, expanding holes in the stratospheric ozone layer.

Whereas in recent years the United States has abandoned any semblance of environmental leadership and instead, America has become the world's foremost obstacle to efforts to address the most important environmental problem of our time: global warming.

Whereas global warming is already undermining world food systems, wreaking havoc on global supplies of fresh water, extending the range of vectors carrying infectious diseases, and changing patterns and forms of precipitation, resulting in droughts in some regions and excess rainfall in others as well as increasing the intensity of hurricanes and other types of extreme weather which if not reversed, global warming will lead to truly disastrous consequences, including the loss of major coastal cities, here and around the world.

Whereas global warming will seriously affect the health, economic, and social well being of Latinos and all human beings on the planet.

Whereas America, as the largest producer of global warming, pollution, and as the richest, most powerful, most scientifically advanced economy on the earth has a moral responsibility to lead the world toward a sustainable future.

In passing this resolution, we are asking that:

1. The federal government should enact mandatory caps on greenhouse gas pollution that return emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. The U.S. should lead this effort by:

a) adopting a declining cap covering major sources of greenhouse gasses that may be implemented through market-based mechanisms and other emissions reductions strategies;

b) radically upgrading the energy efficiency of all federal buildings and equipment, cutting energy consumption in half by 2020;

c) using our federal procurement policy to create a huge market for and drive down the costs of solar equipment, super-efficient vehicles, LED lighting, and other energy technologies;

d) requiring minimum fuel efficiency standards for all cars, light trucks, and other passenger vehicles to be set at 35 mpg by 2012, 40 mpg by 2015, and 50 mpg by 2020;

e) extending and expanding production-tax incentives for wind power, solar power, geothermal power, and other existing and prospective renewable energy sources until the reductions in CO2 emissions are reached;

f) creating federal incentives for liquid fuels from biomass so that by 2015 they will have created a robust domestic industry that does not depend upon corn and other grains for feedstocks; and

g) creating a wide-range of incentives for cities and states to act as laboratories of democracy, encouraging them to experiment with promising innovations that might or might not succeed.

2. In return, such a program will produce a rich harvest of domestic jobs, provide new motivation to the nation's educational system, diminish and eventually eliminate the flow of petrodollars abroad, and restore America to its role as a respected leader in the community of nations.

3. Cities should:

- a) Mandate the reduction of CO2 emissions by 80% no later than 2050 and establish comprehensive plans to achieve them.
- b) Commit to a city-wide procurement policy by 2015 that allows for only the purchase of energy efficient products, including municipal vehicles.
- c) Meet Gold LEED standards and other energy efficient standards for all new public-sector buildings and major renovations.

4. States should:

- a) Follow California's lead and enact mandatory caps on greenhouse gas pollution that return emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- b) Commit to a state-wide procurement policy by 2015 that allows for only the purchase of energy efficient products, including all vehicles
- c) Create and promote energy-efficiency policies such as improved efficiency standards for appliances, new buildings, and major renovations, and incentives for electric utility companies that promote cost-effective energy efficiency.
- d) Require that at least 25 percent of the state's energy come from renewable sources by 2025.

5. The federal government, states, and cities should ensure that policies, regulations, and laws used to reduce global warming pollution do not adversely affect and are designed to benefit environmental justice communities and that those communities have a voice in decisions that affect their health and well-being.

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