



Supporting Federal Carbon Pricing Legislation to Mitigate Climate Change

WHEREAS, the risks of a warming planet continue to mount while the inadequacy of current responses becomes more apparent;ⁱ

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association believes that the public health community plays a critical role in offering climate change strategies and interventions that protect people's health and declared 2017 the Year of Climate Change and Health;ⁱⁱ

WHEREAS, climate change can harm the water supply, increase vector-borne diseaseⁱⁱⁱ and increase extreme weather events;

WHEREAS, vulnerable populations such as communities of color, the elderly, young children, the poor and those with chronic illnesses bear the greatest burden of injury, disease and death related to climate change;

WHEREAS, temperature rise across the Arctic is more than twice the global average^{iv} and has diminished sea and land ice,^v has increased coastal erosion,^{vi} permafrost thaw,^{vii} and wildfire activity,^{viii} while models project that these changes will continue;^{ix}

WHEREAS, acidification of the oceans, entirely due to human-caused CO₂ emission, has serious implications on the food web that sustains Alaska fisheries, and Alaska is expected to experience the effects of ocean acidification faster and more seriously than lower latitudes;^x

WHEREAS, climate change will add billions of dollars through the end of the century to the cost of maintaining and repairing Alaska's public roads, buildings and utilities, but reducing greenhouse gas emissions will lessen that cost;^{xi}

WHEREAS, staying below a 2°C increase in the Earth's average temperature requires us to cut greenhouse gas emissions by up to 70 percent by 2050, and eliminate them entirely by the end of the century;^{xii}

WHEREAS, the United States Congress can enact a national carbon tax on fossil fuels, based on the amount of carbon dioxide the fuel will emit when burned;

WHEREAS, for efficient administration, fossil fuels can be taxed once, as far upstream in the economy as practical, or at the port of entry into the United States;

WHEREAS, a national, revenue-neutral carbon tax starting at a relatively low rate and increasing steadily over future years is a market-based solution that would minimally disrupt the economy while sending a clear and predictable price signal to businesses to develop and use non-carbon-based energy resources;

WHEREAS, Citizens' Climate Education commissioned a nation-wide macroeconomic study on the impact of a revenue-neutral carbon tax, showing that after 10 years, such a tax would lead to a decrease in carbon dioxide emissions by 33 percent, an increase in national employment by 2.1 million jobs, and an annual dividend of \$3,456 per family of 4;^{xiii}

WHEREAS, border adjustments, such as carbon-content-based tariffs on products imported from countries without comparable carbon pricing and refunds to our exporters of carbon taxes paid, can maintain the competitiveness of United States businesses in global markets;



WHEREAS, a January 2017 US Treasury Department analysis showed that revenue from a carbon fee and dividend plan could grow and expand productive capacity of the economy through investing in infrastructure, education, research and development;^{xiv}

WHEREAS, under such a plan, a majority of Americans, especially the bottom income groups, would come out ahead, ^{xv} including households in rural Alaska;^{xvi}

WHEREAS, many states including Alaska have in recent years shown that it is possible to increase their real gross domestic product (GDP) while reducing their carbon dioxide emissions;^{xvii}

WHEREAS, a national carbon tax can be implemented quickly and efficiently, and respond to the urgency of the climate crisis, because the federal government already has in place mechanisms, such as the Internal Revenue Service, needed to implement and enforce the tax and already collects taxes from fossil fuel producers and importers; and

WHEREAS, a national carbon tax would make the United States a leader in mitigating climate change and the advancing clean energy technologies of the 21st Century, and would create incentives for other countries to enact similar carbon taxes, thereby reducing global emissions without the need for complex international agreements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association hereby urges the United States Congress to enact, without delay, a tax on carbon-based fossil fuels;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that that the tax should be collected once, as far upstream in the economy as practical, or at the port of entry into the United States;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the tax rate should start low and increase steadily and predictably to achieve the goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the United States to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all tax revenue should be returned to Americans to protect them from the impact of rising prices due to the tax;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the international competitiveness of United States businesses should be protected by using carbon-content-based tariffs and tax refunds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from Alaska in the Congress of the United States.

FISCAL IMPACT ON ALPHA: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to Alaska legislators and other government officials.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT: Mitigating global warming and related climate changes in Alaska will help prevent increases in vector-borne disease and extreme weather events, protect fisheries, and reduce demands on public health infrastructure, all of which especially benefit vulnerable populations. Worldwide public health impacts will be far greater, including all of the above as well as lessening the direct health harms of extreme heat events,

preserving water supplies, and reducing pressures that lead to mass migration, such as loss of arable land and sea level rise.

Adopted January 16, 2018

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- ⁱ J. Hansen, M. Sato, P. Hearty, R. Ruedy, M. Kelley, V. Masson-Delmotte, G. Russell, G. Tselioudis, J. Cao, E. Rignot, I. Velicogna, E. Kandiano, K. von Schuckman, P. Kharecha, A.N. Legrande, M. Bauer, K.-W. Lo (2015) Ice melt, sea level rise and superstorms: evidence from paleoclimate data, climate modeling, and modern observations that 2°C global warming is highly dangerous. *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*, 15, 20059–20179.
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- ⁱⁱ <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/climate-change>
- ⁱⁱⁱ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/vectors.htm>.
- ^{iv} Christensen JH, et al. (2013) Climate phenomena and their relevance for future regional climate change. *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, ed Stocker TF, et al. (Cambridge Univ Press, Cambridge, UK), pp 1217–1308.
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