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SB05-09/10: Climate Change Legislation

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana
Resolution Regarding Climate Change Legislation
September 30, 2009
Senate Bill SB5-09/10
Authored by: Owen Weber, UM Climate Action Now!
Sponsored by: Patrick Rhea, ASUM Senator

Whereas, The University of Montana has dedicated itself to reducing green house gas emissions by 80% by midcentury as laid out in the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment;

Whereas, the University of Montana aims to comply with Governor Schweitzer’s 20x10 initiative pledging to reduce energy consumption 20% by 2010;

Whereas, the students of the University of Montana voted to self impose an optional $4 fee for the Revolving Energy Loan Fund to finance energy efficiency projects on campus;

Whereas, the University of Montana has developed the Climate Change Studies minor to educate students about this interdisciplinary topic. As the first undergraduate program of its kind in the United States, the University is demonstrating its commitment to sustainability studies in higher education;

Whereas, the University of Montana considers itself part of a community with national and international efforts to reduce carbon emissions,

Whereas, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC), which is made up of the world’s leading scientists, stated that developed countries like the United States should reduce their green house gas (GHG) emissions by 45% of 1990 levels by 2020 and 95% below 1990 by 2050. The IPCC has warned that global atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) levels must remain below 350 parts per million to avoid severe effects from global climate change;

Whereas, the United States Congress is currently legislating the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES) considering climate change legislation which should set up emission reduction targets for industry;

Whereas, the international community is participating in the next United National Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen is being held in December, and thus, it is crucial for the United States to show progress in order to build upon strong international agreements to reduce GHG emissions;

Whereas the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power act sets forth that coal fire plants which will continue to exist must adhere to the Clean Air Act. In addition, a climate bill must also create general source standards for CO2 emissions maintaining that plants must capture 65% by 2020 and 50% of CO2 emissions from now until 2020.

Therefore Let It Be Resolved, that the Associated Students of The University of Montana (ASUM) call on Senator Tester and Senator Baucus calls upon the Congressional Representation of Montana, on behalf of the students of The University of Montana, recognize the need to pass science based national climate legislation prior to the international negotiations fifteenth Conference of Parties (COP-15) in Copenhagen, Denmark;
Let It Be Further Resolved that ASUM believes that the United States Senate must pass legislation that will cut reduce carbon dioxide levels emissions both immediately and substantially. This should be done by setting an aggressive cap on carbon emissions, and by auctioning 100% of the pollution allowances. This cap must reduce CO2 emissions by 45% below 1990 levels by 2020, and 95% below 1990 levels by 2050. The funds generated from said auction must be distributed in an equitably just manner.

Let It Be Further Resolved, that the climate bill must provide provisions for developing a green economy. These funds would allow for the creation of a “clean energy corps” that would create services, training and 500 millions of new jobs in the emerging clean energy economy;

Let It Be Further Resolved, that ASUM urges the Senate to pass legislation with phase out plans for fossil fuel coal fire power. Legislation should, as of its ratification, begin phasing out the high carbon emission sources of energy, while establishing an equitable transition for workers and their communities who will be affected by these plans; Plants that will continue to exist must adhere to the Clean Air Act. A climate bill must also create General source standards for CO2 emissions maintaining that plants must capture 65% by 2020 and 50% of CO2 emissions from now until 2020. Legislation should, as of its ratification, begin phasing out the coal fire power plans while establishing an equitable transition for workers and their communities who will be affected by these plans;

Let It Be Further Resolved that ASUM urges Senator Tester and Senator Baucus the U. S. Senate to become a leaders in actively securing a clean and just energy future. The United States should work with other nations to create the next global climate treaty in December and define the path of reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide emissions levels below 350 parts per million. The United States will also help assist communities and countries in their shift to low-carbon economies.

Let It Be Further Resolved that an ASUM executive will write a letter to the Congressional Representatives informing them of the endorsement and providing a copy of the resolution, Senator Tester, Senator Baucus, and Representative Rehberg on behalf of the students of The University of Montana, urging their support on climate legislation. Included in the letter will be a copy of this Resolution.

Passed by Committee: _________________, 2009
Passed by Senate: ________________________, 2009

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Andrew Dusek,  Emily May,
Relations and Affairs Chair  Chair of the Senate