

EMERGENCY ACTION NEEDED TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE AND PROTECTION

WHEREAS, the collapse of the giant West Antarctica ice sheet is now underway that will lead to rising sea levels, according to a peer-reviewed NASA funded study and confirmed by an independent study conducted by University of Washington scientists; and

WHEREAS, according to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (2014), total anthropogenic Green House Gas (GHG) emissions have continued to increase over 1970 to 2010, with larger decade increases toward the end of the period; and that annual GHG emissions grew on average by 1.0 giga tonne carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO₂ eq) (2.2%) per year from 2000 to 2010 compared to 0.4 GtCO₂eq (1.3%) per year from 1970 to 2000; and

WHEREAS, total anthropogenic GHG emissions were the highest in human history from 2000 to 2010 and reached 49(±4.5) GtCO₂eq/yr in 2010 (IPCC, 2014); and

WHEREAS, CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes contributed about 78% of the total GHG emissions increase from 1970 to 2010, with a similar percentage contribution from the period 2000 to 2010 (IPCC, 2014); and

WHEREAS, of the 49 (±4.5) GtCO₂eq emissions in 2010, 35% of GHG emissions were released in the energy supply sector; 24% in Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use; 21% in industry, 14% in transport and 6.4% in buildings IPCC 2014); and

WHEREAS, without additional efforts to reduce GHG emissions beyond those in place today, emissions growth is expected to persist driven by growth in global population and economic activities; baseline scenarios result in global mean surface temperature increases in 2100 from 3.7 to 4.8°C compared to pre-industrialized levels (median values: the range 2.5°C to 7.8°C when including climate uncertainty (IPCC 2014); and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Conference of Mayors, through a 2012 resolution, supports the authority of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to regulate GHG emissions under the Clean Air Act and filed an amicus brief in Massachusetts v EPA in which the Supreme Court ruled that EPA had such authority; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Conference of Mayors has long supported the need to reduce GHG emissions from major sources in order to mitigate global warming and its dire consequences, including recently proposed GHG emission standards for new fossil fuel generating sources; and

WHEREAS, U.S. cities and our metro economies will be significantly threatened by rising sea levels and more severe storms if climate protection strategies to reduce GHG emissions are not implemented, resulting in personal injury, dramatic property loss, increased infrastructure costs, and other negative consequences on our cities and their citizens,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on the Administration and Congress to enact an Emergency Climate Protection law that provides a framework and funding for the implementation, in conjunction with state and local government and the private sector, of a comprehensive national plan to dramatically reduce GHG emissions to avoid catastrophic impacts of climate change on the planet, including full funding of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, incentives for the implementation of energy efficiency building standards, the development of more aggressive mileage efficiency standards, adoption of a national renewable portfolio standard, establishment of national GHG reduction goals; and creation of a Federal Climate Protection Board to oversee progress of meeting such goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress permanently extend renewable energy tax credits, particularly those for solar, wind and geothermal, among others; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on the EPA to provide flexibility in its development of CAA standards for existing utility generating facilities to reduce GHG emissions, allowing a variety of mechanisms such as participation in regional emission trading systems, investments in renewable energy technologies, adoption of renewable energy portfolio standards, implementation of energy conservation programs, and other GHG reduction strategies directed both at particular utility generating facilities (inside the fence) and programs beyond such facilities (outside the fence), provided that actual reductions in GHG emissions are achieved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the nation's mayors call on the Administration to give high priority to the pursuit of international agreements to address global climate change and GHG emission reductions.

Projected Cost: Unknown