

Resolution for 39th International AFSCME Resolution in Boston Climate Change Action Plan

WHEREAS, AFSCME recognizes that climate change is the leading environmental, economic, and social challenge of our time, with the potential to cause irreparable harm to the physical and social fabric of our communities; and

WHEREAS, AFSCME International has adopted resolutions at previous conventions regarding the environment and global warming in 1994, we resolved in part “that AFSCME continue to support the efforts of Public Services International and public sector unions throughout the world”, in 2004 we resolved in part “that AFSCME express its support for the international Global Warming Treaty “, and in 2008 we resolved in part “that AFSCME calls for the adoption of federal legislation to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions to levels consistent with the recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world’s leading body of climate experts”, all of which urge action by our members and affiliates on this important issue; and

WHEREAS, the AFSCME 2008 resolution on Global Warming and Green Jobs resolved to “call for the adoption of federal legislation to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions to levels consistent with the recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),” which urge “60 to 90 percent reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by the year 2050 in order to avoid the worst and most costly impacts of climate change”; and

WHEREAS, the most recent studies of greenhouse gas emissions show that the primary sources of greenhouse gas emissions are from materials consumption, energy use, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, methods for effectively dealing with climate change include strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (known as mitigation) and also strategies for preparedness in responding to the changes to the environment that are already inevitable due to increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (known as adaptation or preparedness); and

WHEREAS, climate change mitigation and preparedness strategies will include large investments in public infrastructure and services, such as energy efficiency programs, expanded public transportation systems, water services, renewable energy, as well as preparing for extreme weather events; and

WHEREAS, AFSCME International members are uniquely placed to play a leadership role on climate change at local, state, national, and international levels because of their work in service of the public in a variety of jobs that contribute to climate change mitigation and preparedness; and

WHEREAS, in implementing solutions to climate change, AFSCME can help the United States labor movement to be engaged in the process, enhance the image of

our union nationally and internationally, and demonstrate to our members that our union cares about this important issue; and

WHEREAS, a transition to a strong green economy, defined as a strong economy based on clean and renewable energy, family wage green jobs and equitable outcomes for all members of our community, would result in a stronger tax base with which essential public services can be funded; and

WHEREAS, the AFSCME Green Ribbon Committee has made significant progress in creating tools for members to become more engaged and informed on issues of sustainability and climate change at work and at home;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that all Council affiliates in AFSCME support the AFSCME Green Ribbon Committee's work to make AFSCME a leader on sustainability issues and aid in promoting the AFSCME Green toolkit to support member action for sustainability in their Councils and Locals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AFSCME International and its affiliates support and endorse the climate change position created by Public Services International which includes the following:

1. Advocate for a legally binding and science-based agreement to cut greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries by at least 30% by 2020, and 85% by 2050 compared with 1990 levels.
2. Support a nationwide commitment to building and renewing public infrastructure, with public investments in key sectors such as water, energy, waste management, affordable and energy efficient housing, energy retrofitting of buildings, sustainable agriculture, public transportation, health care, and other essential infrastructure.
3. In establishing measures to mitigate the impact of climate change, protect the rights of people displaced by the consequences of climate change.
4. Call on governments to make major public investments in greening the economy.
5. Empower those affected by climate change, including workers, to have meaningful opportunities to be heard and to influence public policy.
6. Support workers whose jobs are affected by climate change policies by providing job training and other services to enable them to transition to new jobs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AFSCME will send a delegation of representatives to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Mexico in 2010 with the objective of obtaining agreement for United States to be a signatory in an international climate treaty with legally-binding, science-based greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that match those listed above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AFSCME encourage other unions to join us in advocating for a more aggressive greenhouse gas emission reduction strategy at the national and international level; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AFSCME will support development of and advocate for creation of a national renewable power standard of a minimum of 20 percent of electricity via renewable sources by 2020; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AFSCME identify key staff to act as a sustainability and climate change team, who can be responsible for (a) lobbying for the climate policy at the national and international level, (b) complete a research analysis of how climate change will impact AFSCME members, (c) research the public revenue potential from climate legislation and carbon markets, and (d) evaluate existing pension investments for sustainability criteria and aim to reduce investments in climate-polluting companies, and invest instead in sustainable businesses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Council and local affiliates will support state and local government agencies to accelerate and expand their commitment to greenhouse gas emission reduction programs, and encourage them to include specifications for public contracts to include (a) equitable opportunities for green jobs among historically-disadvantaged communities, (b) fair wages and benefits for workers, and (c) preference for local firms.

Submitted By:

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