

## **SANTA FE COUNTY RESOLUTION**

**NO. 2013-**

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**A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THAT: CLIMATE CHANGE IS A REAL AND GROWING THREAT TO THE WELL-BEING OF PRESENT AND FUTURE INHABITANTS OF SANTA FE COUNTY; THE POLLUTION CAUSED BY HUMANS BURNING FOSSIL FUELS IS A PRIMARY CAUSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE; AND IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR CITIZENS AND NATURAL ASSETS SANTA FE COUNTY SUPPORTS A FEDERAL REVENUE-NEUTRAL FEE ON CARBON PRODUCTION AT ITS SOURCE, WITH THE FEES BEING RETURNED TO AMERICANS AS A DIVIDEND**

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**WHEREAS**, climate scientists worldwide are in near-unanimous agreement that the planet is warming rapidly and to a degree that is perilous to human civilization, to numerous species, and to the global ecosystem, and that the primary cause of that warming is human activity, especially through the accelerating combustion of fossil fuels that create CO<sub>2</sub> as a byproduct;

**WHEREAS**, the newly-released 2013 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report has reinforced these findings, especially the extent of human agency in causing climate changes, including that:

1. Atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and nitrous oxide have increased to levels unprecedented in the last 800,000 years, and CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations have increased by 40% since pre-industrial times;
2. It is extremely likely (95-100%), that more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature from 1951-2010 was caused by the manmade increase in greenhouse gas concentrations and other anthropogenic forces; and
3. Every additional release of greenhouse gases diminishes our chances of avoiding catastrophic climate change;

**WHEREAS**, Santa Fe County desires to secure for its residents and their children the continuity of our cultural values, our personal freedoms, and our well-being, and declares that the natural beauty of Santa Fe is among the most valued and important assets;

**WHEREAS**, Santa Fe County should protect, preserve and enhance the County's natural endowments, plan for and regulate land use and development, manage the county's growth, and encourage source reduction;

**WHEREAS**, Santa Fe County has a record of accepting these responsibilities and acknowledging the reality of climate change, its probable effects, and our ability and responsibility to reduce our contribution to the causes of climate change;

**WHEREAS**, the urgent need to transition from fossil fuels can best be accomplished with a market-based program, namely a revenue-neutral carbon fee and rebate;

**WHEREAS**, such an instrument would encourage consumers and the market to replace their consumption of carbon-based energy with innovative energy sources, whether by being more efficient or by choosing other, less carbon-intensive energy sources;

**WHEREAS**, a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend is a superior method to reduce carbon emissions for the following reasons:

1. The fee would motivate everyone to conserve and to adopt renewable energy without the need for extensive governmental regulatory controls or infrastructure;
2. The fee would employ a free market approach to encourage innovative processes, not only in energy production, but also in every other field in which energy is consumed, e.g., electric cars, mass transportation, architectural planning and construction, water heating, lighting, and air conditioning in residential and commercial buildings;
3. Levying the fee at the point of production would be more efficient, less expensive and provide more accurate price signals than would doing so at the points of consumption;
4. The fee would incentivize the development and use of alternative energies and attendant technologies, eliminating the need for government subsidies that attempt to forecast alternative energy winners and losers;
5. Because the fee is levied on the same basis on all businesses, it is fairer to every business and easier to administer than alternatives, such as a cap and trade system;

**WHEREAS**, further delay in responding to this crisis increases the risk of catastrophic climate change, imminently threatens low-lying coastal areas and land and sea species, threatens water supplies,

increases the frequency of severe weather events, reduces the time available and increases the cost of undertaking adequate responses, and increases risks to the global economy.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Board of County Commissioners of Santa Fe County strongly urges the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that levies an annually increasing revenue neutral fee on the carbon in fossil fuels at the point of production and importation, sufficient to:

- a) Encourage individuals and corporations to produce and use less fossil fuels;
- b) Make the transition from fossil fuels less onerous to consumers and to the economy by returning to Americans on an equitable basis all of the revenues gained from the fee;
- c) Reduce US CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions to 10% of 1990 levels by 2050;
- d) Encourage similar actions by other nations trading with the United States, by suitable carbon-content-based fees for imports and rebates for exports to nations that have not taken such actions.

**ADOPTED** this 10<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2013

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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**Kathleen Holian, Chairperson**

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

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**Geraldine Salazar, County Clerk**

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**Stephen C. Ross, County Attorney**