



# NHCSL

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

## RESOLUTION

**No. 2019-20**

### **Equitable and Just Policies to Address Climate Change**

Reported to the Caucus by the NHCSL  
Energy, Infrastructure and Environment Task Force  
Sen. Moisés “Mo” Denis (NV), Chair

**Sponsored by Del. Elizabeth Guzmán (VA)**

Unanimously ratified by the Caucus on December 5, 2019

1 **WHEREAS**, the October 2018 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate  
2 Change and the November 2018 4<sup>th</sup> National Climate Assessment report indicated the  
3 extreme threat posed to and the immediate need to act on climate change. The reports  
4 indicated that-

5 (1) Human activity is the prevailing cause of observed climate change;<sup>1</sup> and,  
6 (2) Climate change is causing sea levels to rise and an increased occurrence of  
7 wildfires, storms, droughts, and additional extreme weather events that  
8 threaten human lives, our communities, and public infrastructure;<sup>2</sup> and,

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<sup>1</sup> [https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15\\_spm\\_final.pdf](https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf)

Refer to page 10 on *understanding global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius*

<sup>2</sup> <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

Refer to section 1 in summary findings on *communities*

9 (3) Devastating impacts on the planet if 2 degrees Celsius beyond pre-  
10 industrialized levels occurs;<sup>3</sup> and,

11 **WHEREAS**, the aforementioned reports indicate a critical need to keep global climate  
12 temperatures below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrialized levels to avoid the  
13 most adverse impacts of a changing climate, which will require; and,

14 (1) An unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy  
15 over the next 12 years; and,

16 (2) Global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from human sources of 40  
17 to 60 percent from 2010 levels by 2030; and,

18 (3) Net-zero emissions by 2050; and,

19 **WHEREAS**, the term "Just Transition" is a framework for a fair shift to an economy  
20 that is ecologically sustainable, equitable, and just for all its members;<sup>4</sup> and,

21 **WHEREAS**, "Blue-green" alliances between labor unions and environmental justice  
22 groups have been implementing just strategies out of their necessity to phase out  
23 harmful industries impacting workers, health conditions, and the planet;<sup>5</sup> and,

24 **WHEREAS**, the United States has a history of social issues impacting a significant  
25 portion of its population including but not limited to—

26 (1) A declining life expectancy with a breakdown in basic needs, such as, clean  
27 air, water, healthy food, access to adequate health care, housing  
28 transportation, and education;<sup>6</sup>

29 (2) A trend of wage stagnation and antilabor policies that have caused, an  
30 unwavering minimum wage since the 1970s, the degradation of public  
31 sector labor unions, and limited socioeconomic mobility;<sup>7</sup> and,

32 (3) The greatest wealth and income inequality since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
33 Century with—

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<sup>3</sup> [https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15\\_spm\\_final.pdf](https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf)

Refer to section B.5

<sup>4</sup> <https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bluegreenalliance.org/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nap.edu/read/13497/chapter/11#164>

Refer to Box 6-1 on *Social Factors that Affect Health Outcomes*

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.epi.org/publication/how-todays-unions-help-working-people-giving-workers-the-power-to-improve-their-jobs-and-unrig-the-economy/>

Refer to "But since the 1970's, declining unionization has fueling rising inequality and stalled economic progress for the broader American middle class"

- 34 a. A gender pay gap resulting in women being paid only 80 percent as  
35 much as their male coworkers;<sup>8</sup> and,  
36 b. A racial pay gap resulting in the average white household having a net  
37 worth of \$144,200 which is roughly 13 times that of a black  
38 household;<sup>9</sup> and,  
39 c. A transitional shift in earnings with the top 1% of American earners  
40 have nearly doubled their share of national income;<sup>10</sup> and,

41 **WHEREAS**, the effects of climate change have intensified systematic social,  
42 environmental, and economic injustices by disproportionately affecting indigenous  
43 peoples, communities of color, migrant communities, rural communities, the poor,  
44 low-income earners, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and young  
45 people;<sup>11</sup> and,

46 **WHEREAS**, the impact of climate change has resulted in higher rates of serious public  
47 health issues including, asthma, cardiovascular disease, malaria, Lyme disease,  
48 respiratory allergies, cholera, malnutrition, mental health impacts, heart related  
49 illness and death;<sup>12</sup> and,

50 **WHEREAS**, climate change is a global destabilizing force that threatens the stability  
51 and security of the United States; and,

52 **WHEREAS**, the United States is responsible for a disproportionate amount of  
53 greenhouse gas emissions and must take a leading role in reducing emissions through  
54 economic transformation.

55 **WHEREAS**, on a list of 20 countries that emitted the most carbon dioxide in 2015, the  
56 United States ranked second with 4997.50 million metric tons of carbon dioxide  
57 emissions.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2018/demo/p60-263.html>

Refer to the section under highlights titled *Earnings*

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/1-demographic-trends-and-economic-well-being/>

Refer to the section on *A growing wealth gap between blacks and whites*

<sup>10</sup> <https://inequality.org/facts/income-inequality/>

Refer to the graphic titled *Top 1% Income Share Has Doubled While Poverty Has Held Steady*

<sup>11</sup> <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

Refer to Section 1 on *Communities* and Section 7 on *Indigenous Peoples*

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.aafa.org/climate-and-health/>

Refer to the graphic on the *Impact of Climate Change on Human Health*

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ucsusa.org/global-warming/science-and-impacts/science/each-countrys-share-of-co2.html>

Refer to the *list of 20 countries that emitted the most carbon in 2015*

58 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State  
59 Legislators will build a broad coalition intent on elevating issues at the intersection  
60 of economic, social, and environmental justice; and,

61 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
62 will focus on retooling the nation’s economy with solutions that center on equity and  
63 justice; and,

64 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
65 recognizes the need to and continues its work to transform our energy grid and  
66 transition away from fossil fuels by 2030; and,

67 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
68 hereby endorses the following-

- 69 (1) A just and equitable plan that leaves no workers of any communities  
70 behind; and,
- 71 (2) Direct large investments and job-training programs in renewables,  
72 including, where available, union sponsored job training programs already  
73 in existence; and,
- 74 (3) Creation of an energy efficient smart-grid for both residential and  
75 commercial energy consumers; and,
- 76 (4) Preservation of clean air, water, and soil for all Americans; and,
- 77 (5) Achieve net-zero emissions by 2050; and,

78 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
79 enact policies that prepare communities across America to mobilize if a climate  
80 emergency occurs; and,

81 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that in light of the situation and dire circumstances  
82 mentioned above, the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators urges Congress  
83 and the President to recognize the duty of the Federal Government to combat global  
84 climate change.

85 THE NHCSL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY AMENDED AND APPROVED  
86 THIS RESOLUTION ON AUGUST 3, 2019 AT ITS SUMMER MEETING IN SANTA FE, NM.

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88 THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS UNANIMOUSLY  
89 RATIFIED THIS RESOLUTION ON DECEMBER 5, 2019, AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN  
90 SAN JUAN, PR.