

Resolution 7.04 - Resolution on Energy Justice

WHEREAS, the United States faces difficult challenges in the field of energy including an overdependence on fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas, and coal, the production and importation of bio-fuels with dubious sustainability attributes, and the resurgence of domestic and international uranium mining and enrichment for the purposes of nuclear power development and military arms proliferation; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America's dependence on imported fossil fuels is undermining the country's national security by tying the U.S. economy to unstable and undemocratic nations, thus increasing the risk of military conflict in political hotspots around the globe; and

WHEREAS, air pollution and global warming is caused by the burning of fossil fuels and the release of its associated pollutants into the oceans, air, soil, and lungs jeopardizes the planet's ability to maintain a livable climate and exacerbates grave public health ailments; and

WHEREAS, low-income Latino, Black, and Native American communities residing in the United States, as well as indigenous and poor people around the world, disproportionately bear the negative economic, environmental, and health impacts of the fossil fuel economy at every stage of its life cycle, from exploration to extraction to production to refining to distribution to consumption to disposal of waste; and

WHEREAS, the current production model for crop-based transportation energy perpetuates agrarian monoculture, eliminates bio-diversity, increases the use of petroleum based chemical fertilizers and pesticides, amplifies water demand and pollution, and boosts crop demand increasing food commodity prices, thus placing economic pressure on net food importing countries and the urban/rural poor; and

WHEREAS, decades of pioneering research and development by both the government and the private sector have yielded a host of promising new technologies that turn abundant domestic energy sources - including solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, clean distributed generation, and ocean energy - into transportation fuels, electricity, lighting and heat; and

WHEREAS, capturing energy from the wind, sun, ocean, and heat stored in the Earth's crust, creates jobs, improves national security, and builds the health of people, the planet, and economy; and

WHEREAS, an energy future based on abundant and clean renewable resources is not only urgently needed, but achievable; and

WHEREAS, energy justice affirms the right of all people, including the poor, women, rural and

indigenous peoples, to have access to affordable and sustainable renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, energy justice affirms the right of all workers employed in fossil fuel, and other polluting industries, to a safe and healthy work environment, without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood based on unsustainable production and unemployment; and

WHEREAS, fossil fuel and other polluting industries need be held economically liable for all past and current life-cycle impacts relating to the production of greenhouse gases and associated local pollutants with revenues held in the public trust to fund the development of the new energy economy, climate change adaptation measures, direct air pollution emission reductions, health care, low-income assistance energy programs, and a just transition for workers and vocational institutions,

1. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso call for a strong national commitment to enacting new policies at the federal, state, and local levels that will allow the United States to become a world leader in clean renewable energy production, manufacturing, and deployment, with full worker rights and protections included; and

2. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso call for a moratorium on all new fossil fuel exploration and exploitation, a moratorium on the construction of new nuclear and coal power plants, the phase out of the use of nuclear power world wide, and a moratorium on the construction of large hydro schemes; and

3. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso support policies to reduce the amount of fossil fuel energy burned to provide transportation, including increased fuel efficiency of vehicles and incentives to reduce global warming pollution from vehicles; and

4. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso oppose the siting of new fossil-fuel based power plants in low-income and minority communities until all other efforts to reduce energy use and enhance clean energy development have been exhausted; and

5. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso encourage international, national, state, regional, and local government agencies to direct public and private investment toward the most disadvantaged communities and provide an opportunity for small businesses, schools, affordable housing associations, and other community institutions to participate in and benefit from efforts to

develop, market, deploy and utilize renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies; and

6. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso encourage state and national lawmakers to support global warming pollution reduction policies that encourage maximum development of new renewable energy and energy efficiency resources and discourage the practice of avoiding direct emission reduction in the energy sector through the purchase of "offsets"; and

7. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso reject any market-based proposal that privatizes the atmosphere and/or grants rights to pollute based on historical emission levels. Any allowances created shall be held in the public trust and auctioned to generate revenue to finance clean energy investments, assist low-income ratepayers and reduce energy consumption through energy efficiency and energy peak demand reduction. Any such program shall incorporate principles of democratic accountability, ecological sustainability and social justice.

8. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso support a national renewable energy standard of at least 20% in the United States by 2020 and at least 50% by 2040; and

9. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that organizations represented by delegates of the 2007 National Latino Congreso encourage the gradual retirement of all existing natural gas, coal, oil and nuclear based power plants and replacement of those resources with clean energy resources.

10. FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Latino Congreso calls for the immediate redirection of all federal subsidies for the oil, coal, natural gas, and nuclear industries towards development of renewable energy.