

Resolution to Endorse the Green New Deal

WHEREAS, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined humanity has less than eleven years to act to avert the worst effects of a climate catastrophe; and

WHEREAS, the 2016 AFT Convention referred to the AFT Executive Council a Resolution on A Just Transition to a Peaceful and Sustainable Economy, which the AFT Executive Council adopted on February 3, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the above resolution noted, among other points, that

“1. The overwhelming scientific consensus is that climate warming trends over the past century are due to human activities, and most of the world’s leading scientific organizations have issued public statements endorsing this position; and

2. We are already experiencing the warming of the planet at a dangerously rapid rate, primarily as a result of our reliance on carbon-based fossil fuels, deforestation and other human activities that have caused a dramatic increase in the global level of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases; and

3. Unless we curb the emissions that cause climate change, average temperatures in the United States could be at least 3 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit higher by 2100, with consequences including sea-level rise of at least 3 to 6 feet, more frequent extreme hurricanes, more powerful tornadoes, prolonged drought, larger and more frequent wildfires, much more severe winter storms in some areas, reduction to agricultural productivity with resulting food shortages and famine, spread of disease, and a spasm of plant and animal extinctions that threatens to eliminate up to half of all living species on earth; and

4. Scientists say that there may still be time to prevent the most catastrophic levels of global warming—if we eliminate the burning of fossil fuels worldwide within the next few years; and that eliminating the burning of fossil fuels is perfectly feasible with existing technology; and

5. The known and proven reserves of oil, gas and coal, if extracted and burned, would emit enough carbon to guarantee catastrophic, irreversible global warming within a few decades; and emergency measures must be taken to prevent catastrophic increases in global warming that will trigger irreversible changes to our biosphere; and

6. Addressing the climate crisis means immediate emergency measures, including, minimally, leaving all fossil fuels in the ground and retooling our infrastructure to run on renewable sources of energy; and

7. There is no good reason why the richest nation in the world cannot fund protection for its workers as we move toward minimal reliance on fossil fuels; and

8. Millions of good jobs can be created by moving toward greater energy efficiency, reliance on renewal energy, and the rebuilding of our civilian infrastructure;” and

WHEREAS, the above AFT resolution concluded that

“9. The AFT is committed to a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy; and

10. It is the policy of the AFT that as much as possible most fossil fuels should be left in the ground; and

11. The AFT will support legislation that enables a just transition for workers and communities directly affected by the transition to a renewable energy economy, and such legislation should

include appropriate protections for workers in the fossil fuel industries and military industries;”
and

Whereas, the AFT Executive Council on October 3, 2018 approved the Resolution on a Just Transition to 100% Renewable Energy, which stated: “**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFT reaffirms our commitment to a just transition to a peaceful and sustainable economy outlined in our 2017 resolution excerpted above;**” and

Whereas, the Pentagon is the largest single emitter of greenhouse gases on the planet, and the AFT has repeatedly endorsed the principle of reducing military spending (except for veterans’ benefits) and using the money saved to create millions of jobs in a peaceful green economy; and

WHEREAS, if climate action is to address inequality, the labor movement must be at the center of shaping climate policies to include just transition for workers, expand collective bargaining rights, and create green union careers, particularly in frontline communities; and

WHEREAS, AFT member leaders, rank and file union activists and youth activists in the Sunrise Movement, and over 100 members of Congress have put the Green New Deal at the center of national discussion on how to address the climate crisis and our historic level of economic inequality, and

WHEREAS, the Labor Network for Sustainability supports a Green New Deal that has strong labor and community provisions; and

WHEREAS, House Resolution 109 and Senate Resolution 59 - *Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal* contains the strong language to meet the climate crisis while protecting workers affected by the transition including ensuring that the Green New Deal mobilization creates high-quality union jobs that pay prevailing wages, hires local workers, offers training and advancement opportunities, and guarantees wage and benefit parity for workers affected by the transition, and

WHEREAS, the stated goals of the Green New Deal include guaranteeing family sustaining jobs with family and medical leave, paid vacations and retirement security to all people of the US, protecting and expanding the right to unionize and collectively bargain, and

WHEREAS, the Green New Deal prioritizes decarbonization projects, union career opportunities, and investments in working-class, low-income and communities of color historically and disproportionality impacted by pollution, high unemployment, poverty, and environmental injustice; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that AFT Local _____ goes on record to request that the National AFT endorse House Resolution 109 and Senate Resolution 59 - *Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal* and urges all congressional representatives to co-sponsor the Resolutions, and urges all affiliated bodies and Labor Councils to do the same, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AFT Local _____ goes on record to request that the AFT funding of the Green New Deal by progressive taxes such as the wealth tax, an increase in the top marginal tax rates for the wealthy to 70-80 percent as advocated by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and a reduction in military spending excepting veterans benefits.