Senate Joint Memorial 7

Sponsored by Senators GOLDEN, FAGAN, Representatives PRUSAK, MITCHELL, NERON, WILDE, WILLIAMS; Senators FREDERICK, PROZANSKI, Representative SMITH WARNER

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure as introduced.

Urges Congress to enact Green New Deal legislation.

JOINT MEMORIAL

To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

We, your memorialists, the Eightieth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

Whereas on April 22, 2016, world leaders from 175 parties (174 countries and the European Union) recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep warming “well below 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels” and to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius,” which in itself is not safe for humanity; and

Whereas on October 8, 2018, the United Nations released a special report, criticized by many leading climate scientists as overly conservative, which projected that limiting warming to the unsafe 1.5 degrees Celsius target this century will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy over the next 12 years; and

Whereas on November 23, 2018, the U.S. Fourth National Climate Assessment was issued, which detailed the massive threat that climate change poses to the American economy and underscored the need for emergency climate action at all levels of government; and

Whereas the death and destruction already wrought by global warming of approximately 1.1 degrees Celsius above late 19th century levels demonstrates that Earth is already too hot for safety and justice, as attested by rising seas and increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, diseases, droughts and extreme weather; and

Whereas climate change and the global economy’s overshoot of ecological limits are driving the sixth mass extinction of species, which has caused a 60 percent decline in global wildlife populations since 1970, could devastate much of life on Earth for the next 10 million years and may pose as great a risk to humanity as climate change, according to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and

Whereas the United States has disproportionately contributed to the climate and extinction emergencies and has repeatedly obstructed global efforts to transition toward a green economy, and thus bears an extraordinary responsibility to rapidly address these existential threats; and

Whereas restoring a safe and stable climate requires a “climate mobilization” at all levels of government on a scale not seen since World War II to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across...
all sectors at emergency speed, to rapidly and safely draw down or remove all excess carbon from
the atmosphere, to end the sixth mass extinction of species and to implement measures to protect
all people and species from the increasingly severe consequences of climate change; and

Whereas a “Green New Deal” has been proposed that would be a sweeping overhaul of the
economy, with equity and justice at the core of its solutions; and

Whereas like the original New Deal, which was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s strategy
to combat the national crisis of the Great Depression, the Green New Deal is ambitious, necessary
and possible to achieve; and

Whereas the Green New Deal would dramatically expand existing renewable power sources and
deploy new production capacity with the goal of meeting 100 percent of national power demand
through renewable sources and building a national energy efficient “smart” grid; and

Whereas the Green New Deal would upgrade every residential and industrial building for
state-of-the-art energy efficiency, comfort and safety; and

Whereas the Green New Deal would eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from manufacturing,
aricultural and other industries, including by investing in local-scale agriculture in communities
across the country; and

Whereas the Green New Deal would repair and improve transportation and other infrastructure
and upgrade water infrastructure to ensure universal access to clean water; and

Whereas the Green New Deal would fund massive investment in the drawdown of greenhouse
gases and make “green” technology, industry, expertise, products and services a major export of the
United States, with the aim of becoming the undisputed international leader in helping other coun-
tries transition to completely greenhouse gas neutral economies and bringing about a global Green
New Deal; and

Whereas the term “just transition” is a framework for a fair shift to an economy that is
ecologically sustainable, equitable and just for all its members; and

Whereas just-transition strategies were first forged by a “blue-green” alliance of labor unions
and environmental justice groups that saw the need to phase out the industries that were harming
workers, community health and the planet, while also providing just pathways for workers into new
livelihoods; and

Whereas just-transition initiatives shift the economy from dirty energy to energy democracy,
from funding new highways to expanding public transit, from incinerators and landfills to zero waste
products, from industrial food systems to food sovereignty, from car-dependent sprawl and destruc-
tive unbridled growth to smart urban development without displacement and from destructive over-
development to habitat and ecosystem restoration; and

Whereas at the core of a just transition is equity, self-determination, culture, tradition, deep
democracy and the belief that people around the world have a fundamental human right to clean,
healthy and adequate air, water, land, food, education, health care and shelter; and

Whereas marginalized populations in Oregon and worldwide, including people of color, immi-
grants, indigenous communities, low-income individuals, people with disabilities and the unhoused
are already disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change and will continue to bear
an excess burden as temperatures increase, oceans rise and disasters worsen; and

Whereas building a society that is resilient to the current, expected and potential effects of
climate change will protect health, lives, ecosystems and economies, and such resilience efforts will
have the greatest positive impact if the most dramatic potential consequences of climate change are
taken into account; and
Whereas justice calls for climate resilience that addresses the specific experiences, vulnerabilities and needs of marginalized communities, which must be included and supported in actively engaging in climate resilience planning, policy and actions; and

Whereas actions to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions or draw down greenhouse gases may be taken in ways that also improve resilience to the effects of climate change, and vice versa; and

Whereas justice requires that frontline communities, which have historically borne the brunt of the extractive fossil fuel economy, participate actively in the planning and implementation of this mobilization effort at all levels of government and that they benefit first from the transition to a renewable energy economy; and

Whereas fairness demands the protection and expansion of workers’ rights to organize as well as a guarantee of high-paying, high-quality jobs with comprehensive benefits for all as the mobilization to restore a safe climate is launched; and

Whereas common sense demands that this unprecedented mobilization effort address the full suite of existential ecological threats facing humanity in a comprehensive, integrated and timely fashion; and

Whereas the United States can act as a global leader by converting to an ecologically, socially and economically regenerative economy at emergency speed and by rapidly organizing a national just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort; now, therefore,

**Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

That we, the members of the Eightieth Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to initiate an immediate social and economic mobilization to reverse global warming and the global economy’s overshoot of ecological limits; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge Congress to enact legislation along the lines of the proposed Green New Deal in order to respond to the climate emergency; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to the Senate Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to each member of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.