

Senators:

We are the members of Common Ground – Oregon / Washington. We heartily support SJM 5-1 and urge you to do the same by passing this resolution.

Restoring a safe and stable climate requires urgent action on the part of the federal government to rapidly and safely draw down excess carbon from the atmosphere to protect all people and nature from the increasingly severe consequences of climate change. Joint Memorial 5-1 advances a market-based solution to this escalating problem rather than a highly regulatory approach.

H.R. 763 as updated for the current congressional session puts a fee on fossil fuels that starts low and grows over time, driving down carbon pollution because energy companies, industries and consumers will move toward cleaner and cheaper options. Once market forces are incentivized to drive a new energy mix into a sustainable future, it will create new jobs, new businesses and build a stronger, more rooted, green economy. If we do not take action to drastically reduce carbon emissions within the next ten years, the cost of mitigating the effects – wild-fires, floods, hurricanes, not to mention mass human migration to more temperate climatic regions, will far outweigh the price placed on carbon production. The proceeds collected can then be used to create alternative fuels and clean energy jobs; a surplus will be returned to U.S. residents via the Carbon Dividend Trust Fund as a dividend.

We must also come to the realization that ultimately a technological fix to the fuel industry is not the only means to confront the overconsumption of non-renewable resources. A broader approach is needed, including recognition of the critical role of land use and land policy in building climate resilience. We must work to change land use and travel patterns that in the U.S. especially are wastefully inefficient. The most well-defined solution is to raise the tax land values and lower the tax on labor and capital investment in construction. This will lead to more compact and efficient cities, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and restore public confidence in the property tax system – whilst growing the economic base.