

Letter to the Hendersonville City Council

The Council established the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) in order to keep the Council advised of environmental matters pertaining to the city. A paramount environmental issue pertaining to the city is the changing climate which is now at the tipping point for humanity. Hendersonville has already seen an explosion of growth in recent decades as more people move to the city from less hospitable environs. As the nation's shorelines grow less stable and the West suffers from increased drought and fire, more people are likely to pour into relatively comfortable and established cities such as Hendersonville. **The ESB is urging Hendersonville City Council to take immediate action to influence federal policy to safeguard the citizens of Hendersonville from the serious harms of climate change.**

The evidence is all around us - raging wild fires, frequent "1,000-year" destructive flooding, mudslides, drought, sea-level rise and unlivable heat increases. The evidence for climate change makes the news daily. We (the residents of Hendersonville) are lucky we are removed from the worst effects of climate change due to our mountainous inland location. The main immediate effect to us will be increased flooding and a massive number of climate refugees which will sorely affect our standard of living and strain our resources.

The Council has wisely put a flood control plan in place in an attempt to prevent the negative effects similar to the flood of 1916 from happening here again. But a century ago, Hendersonville did not have to contend with the immigration of climate refugees from Florida and the coasts. Henderson County is expected to see the need for 17,000 new residence in the next few years, many of them in Hendersonville.

Individual citizen choices have minimal effect at mitigating the effects of climate change; action at the federal level is imperative to slowing down the rapid rise in global temperature already underway. We, the members of the ESB, support the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act that has been introduced in the House of Representatives (H.R. 2307). This carbon fee and dividend approach is the fairest, most fiscally responsible and quickest way to reduce national carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 (in line with goals set by our state). It is fair because every household will see a dividend. It is the most fiscally responsible because the fossil fuel producers will pay a fee for extracting carbon (coal, oil, natural gas), which, although passed on to consumers, will be returned to households in equal shares, with at most 2% of the revenue used for processing. It is quickest because it would reduce U.S. carbon emissions by 33% in 10 years and 90% by 2050.

Why should the Hendersonville City Council involve itself in federal affairs? Because our representatives at the federal level take their cues from us, their constituents. We must communicate with them the urgency about the need to act now and act effectively on this issue in order to protect our community. Only meaningful federal action can mitigate the impact of climate change on Hendersonville. This is not something the city can do entirely on its own.

We the ESB urge the Hendersonville City Council to sign a resolution supporting the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 2307) because the ability of Hendersonville to thrive well into the future depends on the federal government expediently adopting a carbon fee and dividend policy.

With Unanimous Support,

The Environmental Sustainability Board

Enclosed: Resolutions from the cities of Sylva and Asheville supporting a federal carbon fee and dividend policy