

People's Climate Stewardship Act

It's time to take back Earth Day.

Some of our best friends have become the planet's worst enemies.

The climate and energy bills in Congress were designed by big banks and fat-cat environmental organizations that have lost touch with the people and nature.

The bills all use smoke-and-mirrors: cap-and-trade, offsets, and give-aways.

The truth is this: as long as fossil fuels are the cheapest energy we will go to the ends of Earth the deepest ocean, the most pristine land for the last drop of oil and gas, and destroy mountains for the last shard of coal.

But that would guarantee climate disasters for young people and nature – we would destroy creation.

Fossil fuels are cheapest only because they do not pay their costs to society – for damage to human health, the environment and future generations.

So today, based on discussions with religious leaders, congressional staffers, economists, and concerned citizens, I am proposing a People's Climate Stewardship bill.

The bill defines a simple, honest carbon fee, collected from fossil fuel companies upon the first sale at the mine, wellhead or port of entry.

The money collected will be distributed monthly to the public as a green check – so families can afford the energy they need during the transition to a clean energy future.

The rising carbon fee will stimulate investment in low-carbon energy and efficiency.

We will reduce our dependence on foreign oil. We will create jobs, good jobs.

And we will preserve for our children and grandchildren the remarkable planet that we inherited from our elders.

Here, in our nation's capital, it is time to demand a government of the people, by the people and for the people – not for special interests.

It is time not for greenwash and half-hearted measures. It is time for honest effective action for all people and life on the planet. Thank you.

James Hansen, Remarks at Earth Day on the Mall, Washington, DC, 25 April 2010

Press Release of the Carbon Tax Center follows.

Scientist James Hansen Proposes “People’s Climate Stewardship Act”: A Simple Carbon Fee with Revenue Returned to Americans

“Our grandchildren will blame us if we destroy the remarkable planet that we inherited,” warned renowned climate scientist James Hansen today at the 40th anniversary celebration of Earth Day on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Dr. Hansen, awaiting the imminent birth of a grandchild (his 4th), is keenly aware of the threat that potential human-made climate chaos poses to her generation and all who will follow.

We live in a “false economy” of cheap fossil fuels whose prices don’t reflect their true costs to society, the environment and future generations. “As long as coal is so cheap that low-carbon energy can’t compete, we will not make the transition to a clean-energy future,” Dr. Hansen said.

Dr. Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, spoke on this policy-related topic today as a private citizen. He called on the public and lawmakers to reject the “smoke and mirrors” of energy bills now before Congress, which rely on “cap-and-trade” and “offsets.” “We need a bill designed for the public, not for big banks and fossil-fuel companies,” Dr. Hansen said.

His proposal calls for a “simple, honest” carbon fee, collected from fossil-fuel companies upon the first sale at the mine, wellhead or port of entry.

The money collected via this fee would be distributed to the public as a monthly “dividend” or “green check.” Distributing all of the revenue equitably to households will ensure that families can afford the energy they need during the transition to a clean energy future, and it should help win public support for a rising carbon fee.

Dr. Hansen's proposal was produced after months of discussion with religious leaders, the Carbon Tax Center, Citizens Climate Lobby and the Price Carbon Campaign. It incorporates key elements of bills proposed by Congressmen John Larson (D-Conn) and Bob Inglis (R-S.C.), whom Dr. Hansen calls on to join forces for the benefit of American people in building an effective, bipartisan “Climate Stewardship Act.”

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