

Climate Protection and Justice Act of 2015

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

At a time of increasing threats from climate change to our nation's economy, national security, and health, we need to transition away from fossil fuels toward clean forms of energy like wind, solar, and energy efficiency. This is the only moral option we have to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change to leave a habitable planet for our kids and grandkids.

To ensure that the United States makes the transition away from fossil fuels, the bill sets enforceable pollution reduction targets for each decade, including a 40% reduction below 1990 levels by 2030, and a more than 80% reduction level by 2050. The legislation sets a price on carbon for fossil fuel producers or importers starting at \$15/ton in 2017, rising to \$73/ton by 2035, and growing by 5% annually after that. Proceeds from this carbon pollution fee are returned to the bottom 80% of households making less than \$100,000/year to offset any rate hikes by the fossil fuels companies. For an average family of four, this amounts to a rebate of roughly \$900 in 2017, and grows to an annual rebate of \$1,900 in 2030. EPA's existing authority to regulate carbon pollution sources from power plants, vehicles, and other sources is reaffirmed, and if the U.S. is not on track to meet its emissions reduction targets, the EPA shall issue new regulations to ensure that it does.

Low income and minority communities in the U.S. will suffer greater harm from climate change impacts because they live in areas that are more prone to flooding, their homes tend to be older and poorly maintained, and they often lack the resources they need to get back on their feet after a major disaster. To address these historical inequities, and to help ensure that all communities have equal access to the health benefits and economic opportunities associated with the transition to clean energy, the bill provides \$20 billion annually to fund climate resiliency projects in disadvantaged communities especially susceptible to the impacts of climate change. The bill provides \$3 billion annually for energy efficiency improvements in low-income housing and for municipalities, which can save the average low-income family hundreds of dollars each year and taxpayers billions of dollars a year.

The legislation strengthens our protections for manufacturing through a border tariff adjustment mechanism which shields energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries like steel, aluminum, glass, and pulp and paper from unfair international trade policies. The monies raised by the green tariff are used to help improve industrial energy efficiency.

Farmers receive dedicated funding through the USDA's Rural Energy for America Program to improve on-farm energy efficiency and to adopt on-site renewable energy. The bill includes incentives for farmers to adopt no-till practices, and creates an incentive program to encourage the adoption of sustainable fertilizer application practices.

Finally, the bill includes federal electricity market reforms that reduce pollution, increase efficiency, and reduce costs by ensuring equitable grid access for demand response programs.

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