

Minutes for December 8, 2020 CCL-KC General Membership Meeting

1. The December 8, 2020 CCL-KC General Membership Meeting was held by Go To Meeting and convened at 6:30 PM. In attendance were Stephen Melton, Kurt Kloster, Frank Zilm (Our host!), Theresa Noble, Lorraine Elmore, Eslun Tucker, Emily Hurley, Karen Uhlenhuth, Lia Uhlenhuth, Adam Knox, Dave Mitchell, Donna Jones, and newcomers Kelly Hall, an Environmental Studies major, and Matthew Brooks, a software engineer. Welcome and thanks to all who attended and contributed to this meeting.

2. Announcements.

a. Jennifer Brown, leader of our KC-Kansas CCL chapter, reports that Congresswoman Sharice Davids has signed on as a co-sponsor to the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (EICD), H.R. 763. This is great news!

b. CCL believes there is a strong likelihood of Carbon Fee and Dividend (CFD) legislation next year. One reason is that Janet Yellen, the incoming Treasury Secretary, is a huge proponent of CFD. The second is the recent announcement that the EU will begin imposing carbon border adjustment fees beginning January 1, 2023, meaning that the next Congress has little choice but to address the issue.

c. Change in this year's primary ask. CCL's is now asking members of Congress (MOC) to support Carbon Pricing legislation, not just H.R. 763, to show our flexibility and willingness to negotiate.

d. Reminder: CCL Tornadoes Regional Zoom Conference will be February 20-21, so reserve the dates.

3. December 7-11 Lobbying of MOCs. Status

a. Eslun reported that the Dec 7 meeting with Cleaver's office went well, with 5 participants on our side and two staffers from Cleaver's office, one from KC and the other in DC. Karen also provided her impressions of the meeting.

b. Theresa reported that her meeting with Graves' office was cancelled by them at the last minute and would be rescheduled for next week.

c. Emily reported that the meeting with Hawley's staff was the best yet, with two of Hawley's staffers in attendance and showing real interest.

d. The Blunt staff meeting is scheduled for Dec 8, 2:30 CST and is on track.

4. Grasstops Outreach

a. MARC Climate Action Plan. Steve shared his impressions of the Mid-American Regional Council's efforts to develop a Climate Action Plan and their last week's Zoom (Eslun and Dave attended as well). Very important that we stay engaged with MARC and CAKC as this plan develops so we can get their endorsement of Carbon Pricing and other carbon reducing initiatives, like renewable electricity and green building codes.

b. Theresa informed the group on our December 6 meeting with representatives of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, namely Adam Timmerman, the lead for Federal Affairs and for the Energy Committee, and John Jenks, in charge of Kansas and Missouri Advocacy. We will provide them updates on the carbon pricing legislation

as it emerges. They are also big players in the MARC Climate Action Plan. We also discussed the Business Case for CFD white paper we prepared for for the GKCCoC and Frank said he would post it on the website, KCCCL.org.

5. Next Steps on KC Building Codes. Frank briefed us on the plan to get KCMO to adopt the IECC 2021 Building Codes, including their net-zero annex. Frank and Eslun are working this action in conjunction with many local partners, including the Sierra Club, the AIA, and a host of others. The bottom line is that we expect the new code “any day” and that will begin a 90-day comment period before the City Council can vote on the new code. We will be asking you to call and write your city council members in support when the time comes! Frank and Eslun also discussed the proposed KCMO ordinance that would deny tax abatements to projects that don’t meet the new net-zero standards.

6. Obtaining Business/Leader Endorsements. Karen recounted her heroic efforts to secure more business endorsements, and Lorraine and others offered similar stories. We reiterated that this is a CCL priority and many offered to join the effort. Thank you!

7. CCL Calling MOC campaign. (Sign up at cclusa.org/mcc. Liaisons: update scripts at admin.cclcalls.org.) We again urge people to make calls, or alternatively e-mail their MOCs and click the “I called” button in the cclusa.org/mcc website. These calls and e-mails sway MOC opinion! Takes only 5 minutes a month.

8. Website, Facebook, Social media. Theresa recommended adding more resources, like the Business Case for CFD white paper, on the website. Frank will explore. Steve promised to see if he could get more granular data on the household impact of H.R.763. Kurt offered to help crunch data.

9. Newsletter. Steve reminds everyone to look for the newsletter at the end of every month. If you don’t see it in your inbox, check your junk folder and drag the newsletter into your inbox, so your computer knows it is not junk. Many thanks to Julie for doing the newsletter every month! Lots of great information.

10. Donna reported we have \$328.71 in our checking account. Dave said we should use the money to have a pizza party, and by unanimous acclamation, we decided to throw a post-COVID CCL-KC party as soon as it is safe. Stay tuned!

11. New Business. Eslun told us that Cleaver’s office wants us to help them get support for his new bill, the RESPOND Act of 2020. We agreed to ask CCL (national) to support this legislation and our chapter will discuss it and vote on whether to endorse it at our next meeting.

Here is a summary from Manny Arbaca in Cleaver’s office:

RESPOND Act of 2020

I wanted to reach out because Congressman Emanuel Cleaver and Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib are co-leading a significant climate finance bill in the U.S. House of Representatives, and we wanted to see whether your organization would be willing to lend its support.

When my boss chaired his Financial Services subcommittee hearing on the economic impacts of climate change, it became clear to us that not only are large pension programs across the country quietly propping up the fossil fuel industry by having hundreds of millions of dollars of their pensioners' retirement funds invested in fossil fuels, but that such retirement programs are particularly vulnerable to the economic impacts of climate change as well. For a decade, the fossil fuel industry has been the worst performing of the S&P 500. Seven of the top 10 economic risks identified in the World Economic Forum's 2019 Risk Report are related to or caused by climate change. Accentuating this reality, a 2018 study authorized by the state of New York showed that investments in the fossil fuel sector lost the New York State Common Retirement Fund approximately \$22 Billion dollars in estimated profits for its pensioners during the last 10 years.

Our bill, the "Restructuring Environmentally Sound Pensions in Order to Negate Disaster Act", or RESPOND Act for short, is a result of extensive conversations with the economists and climate scientists who served on the Advisory Panel that authored that NY State report and would target the investment strategies of the federal employee pension program, which is the largest in the world both in participants (5.5 million) and in money invested (over \$500,000,000,000).

The RESPOND Act would do the following:

Commission the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board to establish a "Federal Advisory Panel on Climate Change", which would conduct a thorough examination of the financial risks posed by climate change to federal employee retirement benefits and report those findings to Congress. With this Panel and its reported findings, we would have established a well-researched, well-documented baseline for congressional action to secure and insulate the retirement benefits of 5.5 million federal employees from the significant financial risks posed by the changing climate.

If the Board, after examining the report issued by the Panel, determines that pension yields would be both financially profitable and still consistent with the Board's fiduciary duties if low-carbon investment strategies were implemented, then the Board is instructed to immediately set a plan in place to transition their investment practices accordingly. Given the results and subsequent recommendations of New York State's Advisory Panel, we and the economists we consulted strongly believe that the report of our Federal Advisory Panel will unequivocally support the same conclusion — that a transition away from fossil fuel investments is both urgent and necessary in order to insulate federal employees' pensions from climate-related financial risks and losses.

Though unrelated to the federal employee pension provisions, the bill would also require the Federal Reserve and SEC to jointly issue annual reports to Congress that account for the financial risks of climate change to the American economy. These reports would ensure that the federal government is doing its due diligence to fully understand and account for these risks and costs in its current operations and future projections. Importantly, this information would also be made available to financial institutions across the country as they seek to adjust their investment strategies to account for climate change as well.

If this is an idea that you think aligns with your organization's policy goals, we would love to have your group's endorsement. We are looking to introduce sometime in the next 2-3 weeks, so if this is something you might be interested in supporting, we'd be happy to chat more about the bill over the phone or via email to provide more details and answer any questions you may have!

12. The meeting adjourned at 7:59 PM.

11. Our next meeting will be January 12, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. Click on <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/886206757>. You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1 (571) 317-3112. Access Code: 886-206-757. We usually meet in person, but because of the COVID-19 restrictions, we are doing meetings using the go-to-meeting app. Hope to see you all there!

12. We have made tremendous progress this past year, despite the COVID restrictions disrupting all our plans. After a great 2019, we made 2020 even more impactful locally and regionally. Your efforts are making a difference! We are now presented with the long-sought opportunity for meaningful climate legislation. Let's seize the moment! Thanks for all you continue to do!

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