MASSACHUSETTS CLIMATE LEGISLATION

MA S2056: An Act enabling taxpayer donations to the Least Developed Countries Fund established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Sponsor: Mike Barrett, Massachusetts State Senator

1. HELPS THE MOST VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE IMPACTS:
   All funds collected via this bill will go directly to a special United Nations fund singularly focused on helping the people and communities who are the most susceptible to the effects of climate change and who have the fewest resources to adapt and protect themselves. This fund has strong oversight so there is assurance that the monies collected flow directly to those most in need of assistance.

2. ENCOURAGES CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND IS A CALL TO ACTION:
   This innovative approach is voluntary, allowing individuals to choose their own levels of contribution. This demonstrates citizens' awareness of the global impact of climate change and provides an easily accessible opportunity to make a measurable difference in the lives of those most affected.

3. ALLOWS MASSACHUSETTS TO DEMONSTRATE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP:
   By setting this unique and innovative example, Massachusetts will instantly be recognized as a leader in the global fight against climate change. Largely unprecedented, this integration of state and international affairs will serve as a powerful indication of public support, and will be the benchmark for further action by other subnational entities, domestically and abroad.

4. HAS NO STATE COSTS: There are no programmatic or net administrative costs to the state or mandates upon citizens – the program is entirely voluntary.

S2056 creates a voluntary checkoff on state tax returns to help the world's most vulnerable countries cope with global climate change.

Prepared by: Boston University Institute for Sustainable Energy, with contributions from Oxford Climate Policy (www.oxfordclimatepolicy.org), the Climate and Development Lab at Brown University (www.climatedevlab.brown.edu/), & Barbara Kates-Garnick at Center for International Environment and Resources Policy, The Fletcher School at Tufts University (http://fletcher.tufts.edu/CIERP)
PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FUND

The Least-Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) has been used for projects to mitigate the devastation of climate change and enhance a country’s resiliency. Projects reduce the vulnerability of resources that are central to development and livelihoods, such as water, agriculture and food security, health, disaster risk management and prevention, infrastructure, and fragile ecosystems.

For example, Haiti is experiencing longer dry seasons and shorter rainy seasons, but both are more intense. Beach erosion is increasing, fresh water aquifers and estuaries are becoming salt water, and hurricanes are increasing in frequency.

A project funded by the LDCF is allowing Haiti to shift from reactive crisis management to proactive risk management. Funding is being used to train policy makers and other key staff, and informs future policy for better coastal zone planning. They are also revising construction and development standards so that coastal infrastructure and equipment is more resilient to these climate changes.

THIS BILL ENABLES VOLUNTARY CITIZEN ACTION

Citizens across the Commonwealth are asking that the state take action to combat climate change. The majority of residents believe that the state is not doing enough to fight global warming, but should.

- Three-quarters of state residents believe global warming is a “very serious” or “somewhat serious” problem for Massachusetts.³
- Residents set a high standard for themselves. 45% say that people in Massachusetts need to do “a lot” to respond to global warming. However, they give their neighbors a low grade: Only 4% believe residents are now meeting that standard.⁴
- 59% of residents agree with the statement "Massachusetts will excel in the competition for green economy jobs by taking the lead in fighting global warming."³

The voluntary contribution enabled by this bill is a way for those who want to act to do so. Voluntary, state-enabled individual participation will propel and solidify Massachusetts as a leader in the fight against global climate change.

THIS BILL HELPS THE MOST VULNERABLE

Funds collected under this bill will go to the U.N. Least-Developed Countries Fund, devoted entirely to helping the more than 880 million people in the poorest 48 countries on earth.

Displacement, death, loss of livelihood, disease, and the interruption of economic development are all consequences of a warmer, more intense, and less predictable climate. Residents in LDCs are five times more likely to die from climate-related disasters than other citizens of the globe.³ The World Bank reports that climate change could result in more than 100 million additional people living in poverty by 2030.⁵

The world’s LDCs are the least equipped nations to adapt to these changes, and yet they are subject to the worst of them. Outside support will be crucial in determining whether these dystopian scenarios come to pass or are avoided. This fund has strong oversight and safeguards so that the monies collected will be used as intended.


MASSACHUSETTS CAN LEAD THE WORLD

Contributions to the Least-Developed Countries Fund from national governments have lagged far behind commitments made in global climate negotiations. Only one other province or state in the world, the Canadian Province of Quebec, has taken action to help fill the gap in this critical commitment. Massachusetts has an opportunity to set an example that will be acknowledged all over the world as showing commitment and leadership to an equitable and effective climate solution.

For more information: Boston University Institute for Sustainable Energy, iseinfo@bu.edu, 617-358-6248, http://www.bu.edu/ise/un-least-developed-countries-fund-state-bill or Senator Mike Barrett’s office at 617-722-1572.