

Resolution 29

Committing CFT to a climate justice agenda

Whereas, we are facing a historic environmental crisis that threatens our present and future survival; and
Whereas, the science on climate change is irrefutable in regard to the dire consequences of continuing on the same course of reckless fossil fuel consumption and domination of the economy by corporations committed to non-renewable energy sources for profit; and

Whereas, a short list of the many catastrophic effects of unchecked climate change includes severe drought, increased disease, threatened food systems due to dust bowl-like conditions, ocean acidification, increased global conflict over resources, economic collapse, and mass extinction; and

Whereas, environmental pollution, the water crisis, and climate change all negatively impact workers' lives and health and the most damaging effects of the climate crisis will disproportionately impact disenfranchised communities with the least resources; and

Whereas, as a historical force for progressive change and social justice, the labor movement can and must play a powerful role in calling for swift action to address the climate crisis, and in producing tangible solutions that will ensure we strengthen, not weaken, working-class and middle-class communities as we transition to a more sustainable economy; and

Whereas, we know from experience that the labor movement must be at the table to shape the conversation if we are to effect positive change for working people; and

Whereas, historically, we have been sold the myth that we must choose between good jobs and a clean environment. This is a false choice and has been perpetuated by a multi-billion dollar corporate network that dominates the political and public sphere. Thus the challenge is big and the answer is to change the game,

Therefore be it resolved, that the California Federation of Teachers is committed to promoting smart growth, green jobs, and real partnerships between the labor movement and environmental community in order to work toward environmental and economic justice; and

Be it further resolved, that the CFT will:

- Engage our members and the community about labor's role in advocating for tangible solutions to the climate crisis that simultaneously strengthen our middle class,
- Let our members know that good green jobs don't kill construction projects, but rather can actually increase economic opportunity,
- Work to ensure a just transition for working people by insisting that those who might be displaced should be retrained for the new economy and that the green economy must create union career opportunities,
- Build and sustain real partnerships with the local environmental movement and community groups committed to economic and environmental justice,
- Push for bold new political and policy initiatives that effectively address economic inequality and climate change,
- Ensure that candidates' positions on climate justice are part of CFT's evaluation for endorsement in political races,
- Insist that we work towards ending all of our retirement systems' investments in fossil fuels and other commercial enterprises that are contributing to catastrophic climate change.
- Promote legislation that moves us toward sustainability and climate justice.
- Promote and support the formation of a climate justice task force within the CFT.

Submitted by the Labor in the Schools Committee