

FEHA SUPPORTS STRONG EFFORTS TO REVERSE ANTHROPOGENIC CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPT TO ITS EFFECTS

Resolution recommended by the Florida Environmental Health Association Ad Hoc Committee on Climate Change

"Climate change will affect, in profoundly adverse ways, some of the most fundamental determinants of health: food, air, water."¹

Dr Margaret Chan

Director-General of the World Health Organization, December 2007

WHEREAS, there is nearly universal consensus in the scientific community that the threat to human health from climate change is both real and strongly influenced by human activities, and

WHEREAS, the discipline of Public Health is dedicated to finding and alleviating threats to human health, and

WHEREAS, the practice of Environmental Health stands right at the intersection of human health and the natural elements affected by climate change, and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida stands in a position of particular risk from the potential effects of climate change, the dangers of which include the increased risk of extended drought; stronger and more frequent hurricanes; the resulting greater risk from toxic exposures; AND the possible increased occurrence of vector-borne, waterborne and foodborne disease, and

WHEREAS, the Florida Environmental Health Association (FEHA) highly values both its stated mission to apply and promote scientific principles and its stated purpose to preserve, protect and improve the quality of life for Florida's residents and visitors,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that FEHA should support, by voice and action, efforts to both reverse harmful anthropogenic climate change through reductions of greenhouse gas emissions *and* to prepare communities for those impacts already beginning to take place.

¹ Dr. Margaret Chen, The 2007 David E. Barmes Global Health Lecture; Bethesda, Maryland, USA; 10 December 2007. Cited at http://www.who.int/dg/speeches/2007/20071211_maryland/en/index.html

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that FEHA chapters and members should work with local, county and state officials on concrete programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - such as city CO2 reduction plans, sustainable building design, taxes on or incentive-based pricing for carbon emissions, deployment of alternative and renewable energy sources, local adherence to international treaties on greenhouse gas reduction, and investment in research for new technologies to generate, use and transmit energy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that FEHA and its chapters should champion adaptation efforts as a key component of the practice of Environmental Health, and should engage with local, state and national partners to create programs and policies that develop sustainable communities, advocate for the public health importance of the built environment, bring public health planners into land use discussions, build robust response systems for environmental impacts, and create a strong and unified public health workforce.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that FEHA will create and maintain a web-based climate change resource which will name specific recommended best practices for reducing emissions and adapting communities for the benefit of members who are lobbying for these issues and creating programs at the local level.

For more detail on recommended actions, see the attendant position paper.