

NCSL Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Infrastructure

POLICY DIRECTIVES AND RESOLUTIONS

**2018 NCSL Legislative Summit
Los Angeles, California**

Table of Contents

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES.....	2
BLACK VULTURE	4
CLIMATE CHANGE	6
NATIONAL APPLIANCE EFFICIENCY STANDARDS	10
STATE SOVEREIGNTY IN AIR AMBULANCE REGULATION	12
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION	14
AVIATION	18
NATIONAL AGRICULTURE	22
CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE.....	33
ENCOURAGING CONGRESS TO SUPPORT THE EMERGING CONSERVATION ECONOMY.....	34
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.....	36
OFFSHORE DRILLING	38
OPPOSITION TO THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY’S PROPOSED ROLLBACK OF FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE EMISSION STANDARDS.....	40
RENEWABLE ENERGY.....	42
REDUCING BARRIERS OF SMART COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE ADVANCEMENT	45
RURAL MENTAL HEALTH.....	47

COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY: AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

TYPE: RESOLUTION

The automobile is on the cusp of a technological transformation with the potential to both revolutionize personal mobility and provide immeasurable safety benefits. As vehicles that operate on public roads are subject to both state, federal and local jurisdiction, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) understands the need to clearly define state and federal roles as well as avoid unnecessary federal preemption and burdensome federal mandates.

State Authority to Regulate Autonomous Vehicle Testing

NCSL agrees that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) should be the sole entity setting federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS) for autonomous vehicles, equivalent to their current role for conventional vehicles. However, NCSL strongly believes that states are the sole authority when it comes to vehicle use—which includes vehicle registration; driver licensing and education; traffic laws, regulations and enforcement; and insurance and liability. NCSL is opposed to congressional or administration proposals that would seek to preempt this authority from states by prohibiting states from prescribing certain standards or regulations related to autonomous vehicle testing, including requirements related to the presence of a human driver.

FMVSS Exemptions

NCSL recognizes, appreciates, and agrees that authority to issue exemptions of FMVSS remains solely in the realm of the Secretary of Transportation. However, NCSL strongly encourages the Secretary (or applicable designated agency) to ensure that any exemption of existing motor vehicle safety standards provides a safety level at least equal to the safety level of the standard. Further, as exemptions are granted, NCSL implores the department to provide such information to states, in a timely manner.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

30

31 **Advisory Councils**

32 NCSL requests that state legislators be appointed to or included in any congressional or
33 administration task force, council, or other advisory group related to the development of
34 autonomous vehicles. NCSL encourages congressional and administration task forces
35 to work with NCSL to help ensure the appropriate states are included.

36

37 **Cybersecurity Information Sharing**

38 Cybersecurity is a vital aspect of autonomous vehicles. As vehicles begin to
39 communicate with each other (vehicle-to-vehicle or V2V) as well with infrastructure
40 (vehicle-to-infrastructure, V2I, and V2X), the potential risk of cyberattacks and security
41 breaches greatly increases. NCSL urges both the administration and Congress to both
42 share any threat information with state governments and to work with states to ensure
43 that such threats and affected vehicle populations do not become endemic. A
44 collaborative effort is vital in ensuring such safety.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

1 **COMMITTEE:** **NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY:** **BLACK VULTURE**

3 **TYPE:** **RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, the Black Vulture is a scavenger and feeds primarily on already-dead
5 animals; and,

6
7 **WHEREAS**, they also feed on living animals, often attacking birthing animals; and,

8
9 **WHEREAS**, the species has proliferated over the last 30 years and broadened its
10 geographical range; and,

11
12 **WHEREAS**, maintenance of the species must take into consideration that the Black
13 Vulture is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; and,

14
15 **WHEREAS**, the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is authorized, under certain
16 conditions, to issue a depredation permit for Black Vultures; and,

17
18 **WHEREAS**, USFWS has developed pilot programs in Tennessee and Kentucky in
19 which a single, statewide depredation permit is granted for each state; and,

20
21 **WHEREAS**, the holder of the statewide permit is authorized to include persons seeking
22 relief from the damage caused by Black Vultures; and,

23
24 **WHEREAS**, the authorized “sub-permittees” are bound by all the terms of the primary
25 permit.

26
27 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
28 Legislatures (NCSL), calls upon USFWS to make a transition in the statewide

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

29 depredation permit process from pilot program to standard operational procedure in the
30 management of Black Vultures; and,

31

32 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that USFWS, in each state that is experiencing livestock
33 predation/injury from Black Vultures, determine the appropriate state agriculture/wildlife
34 agency or non-governmental organization (NGO) recognized for farm advocacy and
35 award that agency/NGO the aforementioned permit.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY: CLIMATE CHANGE

TYPE: RESOLUTION

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) urges the federal government to consult with state elected officials, their national representative organizations and existing interstate partnerships in developing a federal program. As Congress and the administration examine proposals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, NCSL encourages the federal government to always take the following principles into account:

- Federal action should be flexible, allowing for a range of complementary strategies at the state and federal level maintaining a strong role for state, local and tribal government in any federal action.
- Federal legislation should provide states the authority and flexibility to work within an overall framework; to apply the law effectively to all sources of emissions and ensure achievement of climate change goals in the most cost effective, timely and efficient manner for each state.
- Federal legislation should not preempt state or local governments from enacting policy options that differ from federal choices or from enacting stricter or stronger measures within their jurisdiction.
- Federal legislation should afford states the flexibility to form regional cooperatives and implement innovative policies that advance federal efforts to reduce the effects of climate change.
- Congress must authorize and appropriate sufficient funds for federal, state and local governments to implement any federal legislation. These funds should be newly authorized appropriations, not reprogrammed resources.
- Federal legislation should ensure state legislative authority in any federal climate change legislation and affirm the active role played by state legislatures in both fiscal and substantive aspects of state policymaking.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

- Federal legislation providing for the allocation of greenhouse gas reduction programs to states should include language making decisions related to such allowances subject to state legislative approval.

NCSL urges the federal government, should it choose to act on this issue, to take into account the following principles regarding program design components:

- Any national system must include short, medium and long-term goals and incorporate a rigorous oversight program that provide for ongoing study and analysis of the system to ensure it is achieving intended goals.
- A new national program should serve to address uncertainties that are hampering investment in generation, transmission and distribution and enhance the likelihood that appropriate technologies will be developed and other solutions implemented so as to achieve the desired reductions in GHG emissions in the most economical manner possible.
- Federal legislation should be designed appropriately to balance competing criteria, including, but not limited to, equity, economic efficiency and ease of administration.
- Revenue derived from a greenhouse gas reduction program should be directed to complimentary policies focused on mitigating climate change consumer costs including but not limited to energy research & development, weatherization, conservation and energy efficiency activities.
- A national program to reduce GHG emissions must also address adaptation issues.
- Auctioning of allowances may be the most economically efficient mechanism for achieving a GHG emissions reductions goal. However, the allocation of emissions allowances at no cost can serve as an appropriate transition measure necessary to ensure continued reliability, minimize economic dislocation resulting from the carbon intensity of the existing infrastructure, and allow for development and deployment of needed new technologies and measures to reduce emissions.
- Priority distribution of allowances at no cost should be to those entities in affected sectors where existing regulatory structure provides the necessary oversight to

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

ensure that the value of such allowances is accounted for in establishing price rates for consumers.

- The allocation of greenhouse gas reduction program to states under a federal greenhouse gas reduction program should include language making decisions related to such allowances subject to state legislative approval.
- The establishment of any new federal program should include provisions for transparent reporting and accountability and incorporate the use of third party verification to ensure reported outcomes are verifiable.

Unintended Consequences

NCSL believes that federal legislation regarding the reduction of greenhouse gases should take into account the implications of actions and/or inactions on economic development, energy security, and those most vulnerable citizens. Evaluation should include the life cycle impacts of policy options including ancillary impacts.

NCSL believes that federal legislation should require continuing assessments of the potential impacts to the United States of climate change, by state or region including effects on water resources, agriculture, infrastructure, natural systems, environmental quality, public health, biodiversity and the cultures of our native peoples. Such an assessment will support the development of domestic and international adaptation-mitigation strategies. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should provide funding and assist states in developing assessments and adaptation plans at the state and regional level.

NCSL also urges the federal government to fully consider how legislation will affect low-income households that already struggle to balance needs and expenses. NCSL encourages the federal government to expand and enhance long-term funding for the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program and to ensure that any new federal program does not undermine existing federal, state and private sector energy assistance and outreach programs that assist our most vulnerable citizens.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Research and Development

NCSL strongly urges the federal government to authorize and appropriate funding and provide other incentives to spur expanded research and development (R&D), as well as advance the demonstration and deployment of new and existing technologies to improve energy efficiency, advance mitigation strategies and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

NCSL urges the federal government:

- To ensure that legislation not limit the diversity of technologies supported, as future advancements cannot be predicted.
- To take into account state and regional differences, and not limit or specify the technologies used in each state and ensure sufficient flexibility for each State to determine how to best achieve nationally-set goals.
- To promote current and future innovations and expand the use of such technology through R&D transfer agreements with other countries.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: NATIONAL APPLIANCE EFFICIENCY**

3 **STANDARDS**

4 **TYPE: RESOLUTION**

5 **WHEREAS**, energy efficiency standards as promulgated by the U.S. Department of
6 Energy following enactment of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975,
7 National Appliance Energy Conservation Act of 1987 and 1988 (NAECA), Energy Policy
8 Act of 1992, Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the Energy Independence and Security Act
9 of 2007, for appliances, equipment, and lighting protect consumers, are a cost-effective
10 means to reduce energy and water waste, lower utility bills and decrease pollutants and
11 atmospheric emissions including greenhouse gas emissions; and,
12

13 **WHEREAS**, an average U.S. household saves about \$500 per year on utility bills
14 because of these existing standards; and,
15

16 **WHEREAS**, U.S. businesses save about \$23 billion annually because of these existing
17 standards, money that can be invested in jobs or spent in local economies; and,
18

19 **WHEREAS**, efficiency standards stimulate innovative technologies, which are beneficial
20 to American manufacturers in a competitive global environment; and,
21

22 **WHEREAS**, lower energy and water use helps mitigate the need for new utility
23 infrastructure.
24

25 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCSL urges the Congress and the
26 Department of Energy (DOE) to fully fund and continue this highly successful program;
27 and,
28

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

29 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NCSL strongly urges DOE to amend standards
30 as stipulated by law and in accordance with the review schedule dictated by Congress;
31 and,

32

33 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Congress continue to require DOE to regularly
34 review standards for appropriate updates and to resist any attempt to repeal existing
35 standards.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: STATE SOVEREIGNTY IN AIR AMBULANCE**

3 **REGULATION**

4 **TYPE: RESOLUTION**

5 **WHEREAS**, as many rural hospitals have recently closed, air ambulance services have
6 become increasingly necessary and are being used more frequently to transport
7 patients to faraway hospitals in an emergency; and
8

9 **WHEREAS**, competition among air ambulance services have increased costs; and
10

11 **WHEREAS**, air ambulance services can cost patients tens of thousands of dollars out-
12 of-pocket when companies do not accept a patient's insurance, and emergency patients
13 rarely have the capacity to choose their own air ambulance company; and
14

15 **WHEREAS**, some air ambulance companies refuse to reveal actual costs to insurers,
16 and some insurers are unwilling to pay market value for the service; and
17

18 **WHEREAS**, federal government Medicare reimbursements cover only a small portion of
19 the actual cost of an air ambulance, forcing air ambulance companies to charge patients
20 more; and
21

22 **WHEREAS**, under the Airline Deregulation Act, states cannot regulate routes, services
23 or prices of air ambulances.
24

25 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
26 Legislatures (NCSL) supports state sovereignty in air ambulance regulation in order to
27 protect patients from overwhelming financial burdens for emergency medical services;
28 and,
29

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL urges Congress to amend the Airline

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

30 Deregulation Act in order to provide states the authority to enforce insurance regulations
31 on air ambulance providers to protect consumers.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY: ANIMAL AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

TYPE: DIRECTIVE

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) believes a strong animal production agriculture capacity is imperative in maintaining domestic and international consumer confidence in the safety of the United States meat supply.

Animal Identification

NCSL believes a national animal identification program, if properly implemented in cooperation with the states and territories, could be beneficial in maintaining consumer confidence in meat from the United States, an invaluable tool in reducing and tracking future outbreaks of infectious disease, and serving as an important firewall against any attempted terrorist attack on the food production system in the United States.

Any future effort by USDA to develop a national animal identification program must be designed and implemented in full consultation with state legislatures to ensure proper attention to public interest and financial considerations. Any program must be designed and implemented in cooperation with the departments of agriculture of the states and territories. USDA must work to ensure that any animal identification system is compatible with the current inspection and enforcement systems of the state governments. Any applicable federal program should not be applied to animals involved in intrastate commerce without state consultation.

**** Amendment ****

Equine Industry and USDA Inspection of Horse Meat

~~The processing of horses has become a controversial and emotional issue, resulting in the closure of the last horse processing facility in the United States. Without affordable and economic alternatives, unwanted horses are abandoned. The nation's inadequate and overburdened horse rescue and adoption facilities cannot begin to handle the~~

influx. These additional unwanted horses will compete for adoption with wild horses that are currently fed and sheltered at a public expense. In the Western United States (US), the additional pressure on public lands from horses turned out to run wild is only intensifying the over-population, over-grazing, and ultimate destruction of the ecosystem.

NCSL urges members of Congress to:

- Recognize the need for humane horse processing facilities in the United States.
- Not to interfere with State efforts to establish facilities in the United States. State livestock programs that were once able to recoup the costs of caring and feeding for abandoned animals by marketing them, are now forced to greatly increase their budgets at the expense of taxpayers.
- Recognize the positive economic impact of willing market for the US horse industry. These, and ethnic markets inside the US would appreciate an additional source of high quality protein untainted by disease concerns of other species of livestock.
- Oppose legislation that would restrict the market, transport, processing, or export of horses. Horse processing in the United States is particularly tightly regulated, and the horse is the only animal whose transportation to processing is regulated. Horse processing facilities in the United States are required to have United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) veterinarians supervise the euthanasia, and the euthanasia method is humane, according the American Veterinary Medical Association and the United States Department of Agriculture.
- Oppose limitations under federal appropriations law prohibiting the use of federal dollars to be spent on the salaries of inspectors for ante and post mortem inspections.

Substitute Amendment

The processing of horses has become a controversial and emotional issue. Without affordable and economic alternatives, unwanted horses are abandoned. The nation's inadequate and overburdened horse rescue and adoption facilities cannot handle the

growing number of unwanted horses. In the Western United States (US), the additional pressure on public lands from this growing population is intensifying harm to the ecosystem from over-grazing and increasing costs to state and local governments.

NCSL urges members of Congress to:

Recognize the need to address the growing number of unwanted horses by increasing resources to enhance rescue and adoption while opposing legislation that would restrict slaughter when these methods fail to adequately resolve the growing population of wild and abandoned horses.

Not interfere with individual state efforts that aim to similarly address the growing population of unwanted horses.

Recognize the positive economic impact and relief of budgets at the state and national level created by the establishment of a market for the US horse industry resulting from global, cultural solutions.

Maintain current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) horse slaughter veterinary regulations concerning supervision and euthanasia.

NCSL also urges Congress to reclassify equine as a nonamenable species.

Interstate Sale of State-Inspected Meat and Poultry

The Farm Bill program authorizes USDA to promulgate rules to establish the parameters of the state programs. The proposed draft rule would allow these states to establish an interstate meat shipment program and request selected establishment status for those businesses who wish to remain state inspected, but wish to market products in interstate commerce. The creation of interstate sales of state-inspected meat and poultry programs will level the economic playing field for small business, spur more competition in the marketplace, create a more uniform inspection system, and

91 enhance consumer confidence in the food supply—all of which will benefit farmers,
92 ranchers, processors, small business, and consumers.
93
94 NCSL supports the establishment of interstate shipment of state-inspected meat and
95 poultry programs in qualifying states, and urges USDA to create rules that facilitate the
96 program.

COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY: AVIATION

TYPE: DIRECTIVE

Aviation is a key component of a balanced transportation system and is vitally linked to regional growth and economic development efforts. The development and preservation of a balanced system of airports, which is responsive to the needs of all sectors of the nation, is the mutual responsibility of federal, state and local governments. Given this mutual responsibility, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) urges Congress and the administration to actively engage state legislatures in discussions on the development and preservation of our system of airports and to avoid federal mandates, preemption of state authority and where possible provide states maximum flexibility.

Finance

The following recommendations regarding aviation financing are to be viewed as a comprehensive package and not as individual parts to be implemented piecemeal. Recognizing the safety, security, economic, and other broad public benefits of the services provided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), NCSL supports efforts to:

- continue a General Fund contribution, due to military and federal usage of airport facilities and services. Maintain the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, financed by existing dedicated user taxes and charges, as the primary method of funding federal-aid aviation projects. Any federal aviation fees collected from airline ticket taxes that are diverted to non-aviation purposes should be rededicated or repealed. NCSL supports federal grant assurance provisions barring diversion of airport revenue to non-airport purposes;
- maintain the current structure of federal aviation taxes which equitably distributes the financial burden on all users;

- continue to fully fund the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) at authorized levels annually on a multi-year basis to help support needed safety, security, capacity and noise projects;
- authorize states to use AIP funds for increased security measures required by federal law at a 100-percent federal share;
- provide states maximum flexibility in the prioritization and administration of trust fund allocations, this includes aviation-related planning activities being an allowable expense;
- remove the Trust Fund from the federal unified budget;
- create a mechanism to guarantee that all revenue dedicated to the Trust Fund is spent each year for its intended purpose and that Trust Fund revenue is classified as "mandatory" spending and operate as a "pay-as-you-go" program;
- remove statutory or regulatory barriers to state and locally-generated revenues that support airport activities;
- reduce aircraft noise and a continued set-aside of AIP funds for noise abatement projects;
- continue the Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs) as a supplementary revenue source to finance airport needs;
- exempt from federal tax laws airport municipal bonds; and
- allow the use of innovative financing methods, such as state infrastructure banks and revolving loans, whenever possible to enable states to meet the funding needs of smaller airports.

State Block Grant Program

The state block grant program should be extended and expanded so that all states are eligible to participate. NCSL believes that the program should be structured to allow states the maximum flexibility in the administration of grants.

Development

NCSL supports a coordinated national plan of development as long as state plans for investment are included. As part of the development of the National Airspace System

Architecture, the FAA should make every effort to consider state input. The economies of many parts of the country are dependent on the modernization of the nation's aviation system. Federal policies should support state efforts to address capacity problems through expansion. NCSL supports the increased use of former and current military airports to provide immediate capacity relief for the aviation system.

Regulation

NCSL supports efforts to increase airport capacity and competition within the airline industry. However, NCSL remains concerned over the preservation of state authority over certain airline actions and practices. An examination should be made of other provisions of law that pertain to the ability of the state to regulate or enforce airport safety standards and practice.

Federal-Aid Program

NCSL supports the Essential Air Service (EAS) program and urges the federal government to honor its commitment to EAS. Where EAS is terminated, proper and adequate notification to the affected community should be required and transition plans implemented.

Organized Deployment of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)

Registrations of unmanned aircraft already outnumber manned aircraft which highlights the exponential growth of this technology. Although FAA has issued operational rules for commercial operators (Part 107) and is studying the potential expansion of operational rules through the drone Integration Pilot Program, they have yet to finalize formal operational rules and regulations pertaining to the use of UAS by hobbyists. This has resulted in a type of frontier mentality for use and judgment in that air space.

As the agency continues its work to integrate UAS rules and laws, NCSL recognizes FAA's general authority over the national airspace but believes it is imperative to preserve the authority of state governments to issue reasonable restrictions on the time, manner and place of UAS operations as they relate to states' traditional police powers.

91 including to protect public safety and security, personal privacy, property rights and
92 manage land use. In response to Congress imposing a nationwide registration
93 requirement for UAS operators, NCSL supports the delegation of this authority to states
94 in order to more effectively and efficiently capture all users. Further, NCSL strongly
95 believes in the need for federal and state governments to work together to manage the
96 organized deployment of recreational and commercial UAS and that states should be
97 allowed to conduct enforcement of federal UAS rules if they so choose and that the
98 federal government should ensure adequate resources be available to states for proper
99 enforcement.

101 **Other**

102 Federal support for research and development of facilities and equipment is critical to
103 meet the demands of the next century's air travelers. Reforms in the FAA technology
104 procurement process should be considered.

105
106 NCSL urges Congress to act expeditiously on program reauthorizations so as to ensure
107 continuity and to minimize negative effects bred by short-term extensions of critical
108 programs.

COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY: NATIONAL AGRICULTURE

TYPE: POLICY DIRECTIVE

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) believes that maintaining a strong production agriculture capacity is critical to our nation's strength and is a matter of national security. NCSL recognizes that decisions affecting American agriculture must reflect a working partnership of the federal government with the states in both the formulation and implementation of policy.

Agricultural Fiscal Policy

NCSL urges federal efforts designed to enhance farm income while increasing agricultural exports. Monetary policies must be implemented which promote low interest rates and maintain dollar exchange rates which enhance the potential for sale of this nation's commodities in international markets. The federal government must also maintain a stable financial network capable of supplying adequate amounts of affordable credit to the agricultural industry. The government must also continue to search for innovative financing tools which enhance the ability of agricultural producers to manage risk and stabilize income. In addition, any domestic farm program must work in conjunction with a strong, aggressive export program which protects and expands our export markets.

State legislators should be represented on any working or study group for the purpose of addressing long term agriculture lending and payment needs established by Congress or the executive branch. NCSL urges Congress to review the existing payment limitations for individual farmers and program eligibility requirements to ensure that they provide support to economically efficient farming operations and promote the preservation of the family farm. In addition, the Conference recommends that all federal agricultural adjustment payments, price-support program loans, payments and other benefits not related to soil conservation efforts be limited to citizens of this country or

aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

Secondary Market for Long-Term Loans: NCSL urges the federal government to work with states to assure that the provisions of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 continue to be fully implemented.

Bankruptcy law: NCSL supports federal legislation to permanently extend allowing farm operations to declare Chapter 12 bankruptcy.

Farm Credit System (FCS): NCSL encourages farm credit institutions to work with farmer-borrowers to restructure debt. NCSL urges that any disposition of land and assets held by the System or its units be conducted in an orderly fashion so that such disposition does not adversely affect the value of those assets or of other property within the community. NCSL also urges that FCS institutions continue to work with producers to provide necessary financing for changes in payments and crops resulting from adjustments to federal programs.

Commercial Lending Institutions: NCSL believes that as federal financial assistance is provided to member institutions of the FCS, assistance should also be provided to commercial lending institutions that provide credit to agriculture. Furthermore, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) policies and federal bank regulation procedures must be reviewed to ensure that the maximum assistance is being provided to troubled borrowers, without compromising the safety and soundness of the institution or the assets of the FDIC.

Agricultural Bonds: NCSL supports exempting agricultural bonds from the federal volume cap placed on industrial revenue bonds in each state. Furthermore, NCSL recommends that the President and U.S. Congress amend the federal Internal Revenue Code to make the use of agricultural bonds more attractive to banks and other financial institutions. NCSL also recommends that the federal government permit deductibility for loans financed by issuers that are not necessarily small issuers as defined by the

Internal Revenue Code.

Crop Insurance: NCSL supports a state-federal partnership to develop a fair and affordable crop insurance program that complements other risk management tools available in the marketplace for all crops. NCSL supports an efficient program that promotes informed production and management decisions. NCSL also supports federal efforts to encourage private-sector development of innovative risk management tools. However, any plan for crop insurance must not adversely impact a state's ability to levy premium taxes, regulate the business of private insurance or set solvency standards for private crop insurers.

Marketing

NCSL seeks a federal policy that will sustain a vibrant agricultural marketplace and strong farm economy while providing for competition and fair practices. The federal government should cooperate fully with states' efforts to supplement private sector marketing programs by providing comprehensive marketing, promotion and market development activities. These should include, at a minimum, sustained commitments to the provision of data on market trends and consumer demands, technical assistance, financial assistance and public education campaigns.

Special emphasis must be placed upon the development of new markets through the creation of demand for new crops or products or additional sources of demand for existing commodities and products; the improvement of linkages between buyers and sellers; a shift toward the sale of processed, not raw, commodities and high value cash crops; and the identification and analysis of potential markets. All parties, both public and private sector, must work together to develop effective strategies to exploit those opportunities fully and to maintain an ongoing ability to respond to changing consumer demands.

Direct Marketing Arrangements: NCSL recommends that Congress review the Packers and Stockyards Act as a mechanism for addressing unfair practices that may

occur under direct marketing arrangements, monitor activities in this area, and enact appropriate and timely legislation to safeguard the welfare of producers. NCSL urges Congress and USDA to strengthen and diligently enforce the provisions of the Packers and Stockyards Act in concert with the clear intent of the Act to curb monopolistic abuses in the concentrated meatpacking sector.

Competition

Family farmers ultimately derive their income from the agricultural marketplace. Congress must set rules to improve the competitive environment of agriculture so that farmers are able to retain a greater portion of their income.

Natural Resource Conservation

All federal government actions affecting natural resources should be conducted in close cooperation and only after consultation and coordination with the states. A strong commitment to conduct research, in the area of improved methods of natural resource conservation and protection, must be maintained. The federal government should work with state and local governments to develop agricultural land use policies, but should leave the responsibility for establishment of these policies to the state and local governments. NCSL favors a block grant approach that gives states maximum flexibility. NCSL supports the use of science, technology and effective practices to reduce nutrient losses to water, including nitrogen and phosphorus, from point and nonpoint sources.

We encourage significant federal investment in state-supported projects -- with an emphasis on watershed-based public-private partnerships -- that provide for accountability and transparency, as evidenced by the establishment of goals, timelines, milestones, monitoring, measurement and regular public reporting documenting improvements in the quality of water in public waterways. Fundamentally, NCSL believes that states must be given a much stronger voice in ensuring that federal wetlands, endangered species, and land management policies respect the rights of local landowners and states.

Wetlands and Endangered Species

The federal government should delegate authority to states for the development, administration, and enforcement of wetlands protection and endangered species programs. The national government, acting through USDA, should set broad national goals and standards for wetlands protection and preservation of endangered species, but states should have the flexibility to meet those goals. The federal government, furthermore, should provide financial and technical assistance as incentives to encourage states to assume primacy over wetlands and endangered species programs.

Pollinator Health

NCSL recognizes the importance of pollinators and stresses the negative ramifications of continued pollinator loss, while supporting federal efforts to protect pollinators. We also recognize the key roles that the federal government plays as a landowner and manager, regulator of pesticide products, and financial and technical assistance provider to farmers and other private landowners. As such NCSL supports and calls upon the federal government to:

- develop best management practices and enhance pollinator habitat on federally owned or managed lands;
- incorporate pollinator health as a component of all future federal restoration and reclamation projects;
- revise guidance documents for designed landscapes and public buildings in order to incorporate pollinator-friendly practices;
- increase both the acreage and forage value of pollinator habitat in the Conservation Reserve Program and other federal conservation programs; provide technical assistance in collaboration with land-grant university-based cooperative extension services to federal departments and agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, and other entities and individuals including farmers and ranchers;
- assist states and state wildlife organizations, as appropriate, in identifying and implementing projects to conserve pollinators through the revision and implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans;

- [assess the effects of systemic pesticides and parasites on bee and other pollinator health and take corresponding action, as appropriate, to protect pollinators from pesticides and parasites;](#)
- [take immediate measures to support pollinators with proper habitat and nutrition during the current growing season and thereafter, including planting pollinator-friendly vegetation, increasing flower diversity in plantings, limiting mowing practices, and reduce or avoid, when necessary, the use of pesticides in sensitive pollinator habitats through the use of integrated vegetation, pest and colony management practices; and](#)
- [work closely with the states to align pollinator protection efforts and share best practices.](#)

[NCSL and the states identify as willing partners in the federal government's pollinator protection efforts and will closely monitor federal actions and progress on these, and related efforts of utmost importance to the states and our nation's food supply, urban and rural agriculture economies, environment and natural resources.](#)

Land Management

Devolution of authority to states should also be a goal of federal land management policies. Demonstration projects should be established to determine if state administration of national forests, grasslands, parks and other federal property will result in cost savings to taxpayers and greater sensitivity to the concerns of local citizens and property owners. NCSL, moreover, encourages Congress and federal agencies to hold hearings and public meetings in order to hear the concerns of state and local officials and of ordinary citizens and property holders regarding the impact of federal landownership and regulation.

Soil Conservation

NCSL supports an ongoing education program to make certain that producers are fully aware of the need for proper soil conservation practices and of the best methods to use in their implementation. Diligent efforts must be made by the federal government to

ensure that proper soil conservation practices are adopted and that fragile, erodible land is protected.

NCSL supports requiring that each farm have and follow an approved soil and water conservation plan in order to obtain government assistance. Benefits may be denied if a crop is grown in violation of this requirement. Further, NCSL supports continued extension of the Conservation Reserve Program and federal efforts to protect pollinators, including those that are vital to American food production.

Cover Crop Research

NCSL supports federal efforts to further the development of and proliferation and use of cover crops given the growing concerns about water quality, soil fertility, weed control, nematode control, water retention and biodiversity. NCSL recognizes that cover crops have proven to increase yields in university studies as well as in replicated farm research; are an increasingly popular way to keep soil healthy; helps reduce the need for Nitrogen and other nutrients, and create a healthier soil environment that resists disease and pests; inhibit weed growth by shading them out, by preventing emergence, and by compounds exuded by the roots; are shown to reduce populations of pathogenic nematodes and encourage populations of beneficial ones; break up soil compaction whether it is naturally occurring or a result of heavy cultivation and tillage; add diversity to the natural biological life in heavily farmed soils, often working in synergy with cash crops for bottom line benefits; add diversity to the natural biological life in heavily farmed soils, often working in synergy with cash crops for bottom line benefits.

Research and Development

NCSL supports the state-federal partnership in agricultural research at state universities. Furthermore, funds must be made available to support research and development of innovative products. Funds should also be used for dissemination of information about research discoveries both domestically and abroad. It is particularly important that the land grant universities maintain their commitment to agricultural research and development and that the federal government provide sufficient research

dollars to support this vital effort.

NCSL urges the federal government to maintain a strong research program for the development of adequate, cost-effective and environmentally sound control measures to ensure the eradication of all insect and plant pests and animal diseases, which should be done in close cooperation with the states. Using existing mechanisms and institutions, the federal government should work with the states in providing the basic training and retraining opportunities necessary for the successful operation of an agricultural enterprise and for the continuing adjustment of producers to changing conditions in agriculture.

Intellectual Property Rights in Publicly Funded Research

NCSL calls on Congress to review the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 and subsequent amendments for its impact on encouraging concentration and vertical integration within the agricultural sector, and for its consistency with the mission and purpose of the Land Grant College system. Further, Congress should increase federal support for agricultural research, and retain through grant and contract provisions greater portions of technology arising from such research within the public domain. Congress should also affirm as objectives of the Land Grant Colleges' agricultural research mission to achieve broad dissemination and producer access to crop technology, and preserve and enhance the income and economic opportunities of producers.

Beginning Farmer Programs

NCSL supports a state-federal partnership to confront challenges faced by farmers and beginning farmers, including the use of federal tax incentives to support state-based development and loan programs. NCSL supports changes to the federal Internal Revenue code that reduce borrowing costs for qualifying farmers and strengthen state beginning farmer programs. NCSL is particularly supportive of beginning farmer and other training programs that provide assistance for military veterans and limited-resource farmers. Furthermore, NCSL supports raising the total volume of state bonding authority to free resources for beginner farmer programs if achieved in a manner

consistent with a balanced federal budget.

In collaboration with state governments, as well as public and private local partners, NCSL supports investment in joint research, demonstration and development of food systems that provide opportunity to young and beginning farmers with limited assets, to produce and deliver affordable, healthy, fresh, nutritious food to consumers within the local and regional markets where the producers operate, toward a goal of national food self-sufficiency and optimal health.

Agriculture Biofuels

NCSL believes that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) should be the lead federal agency to examine regulatory issues as they develop for the algaculture (Farming Algae) industry.

Support State Regulation of Agricultural Biotechnology

NCSL supports the responsible use of the beneficial qualities of agricultural biotechnology such as in improved crop production techniques, pharmaceuticals, anti-immune disease control, biodegradable plastics, and other potential benefits to people in their states, the nation, the world and the global environment. NCSL supports the continued regulation of agricultural biotechnology through state and territorial governments working in close collaboration and partnership with the Coordinated Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USDA, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Industrial Hemp Farming

NCSL supports federal legislation to define industrial hemp as a distinct agricultural crop (1% or less THC content) and allow states to regulate commercial hemp farming. Currently 33 states have laws allowing hemp research or farming. NCSL believes that hemp has a long history as a sustainable and a profitable crop, and has great potential as a new crop for American agriculture and industry. According to Vote Hemp, an estimated \$687 million worth of hemp products were sold in the U.S. in 2016, including

foods, body care products, clothing, auto parts, building materials, and paper. Most of these products were made from imported hemp due to federal policy that prohibits commercial hemp farming. NCSL believes that federal policies that obstruct industrial hemp farming are outdated and must be changed.

Avian Flu Response

The highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) represents a significant threat to U.S. agriculture and the ability of our farmers to feed a growing world population. The federal government plays a key role in harnessing resources and providing assistance to farmers, states, and others affected by the virus. NCSL fully supports:

- federal efforts to protect poultry production and the nation's food supply by aggressively working to contain and remediate outbreaks when they occur;
- federal efforts to serve as technical advisors and the clearinghouse of information for all sectors and employing time sensitive approaches to sharing information;
- federal agencies working closely with the states to align HPAI efforts and share best practices; and
- increasing federal funding necessary for state and federal agencies to continue development of biosecurity containment strategies; more aggressive research into the causes of avian influenza; why some fowl are more susceptible; and prevention measures, including the development of vaccines that can be taken.

Wildfire Funding

Due to the significant increases in suppression costs in the last decade, funding transfers have depleted resources from vital fire prevention and mitigation programs. Further, increased fire activity can have substantially negative impacts on air quality, water quality, greenhouse gas emissions as well as the reduction of downstream water storage as sediment runoff lowers the effective level of dams and reservoirs; Additionally, reduced restoration and mitigation funding makes it easier for invasive pests and diseases to infest vulnerable forests; and the anticipated changes in climate will also cause fire risk to escalate in drought-ridden regions, further increasing wildfire suppression costs. Therefore, NCSL urges the federal government to:

- [maintain budget mechanisms for wildfire suppression in order to fund catastrophic fires as natural disasters adopted as part of the Fiscal Year 2018 budget agreement that minimizes the risk of fire transfers from prevention and mitigation programs.](#)
- [Manage wildfires on a regional basis, understanding that increased risk for wildfires on federal lands ultimately will lead to increased costs for state wildfire programs.](#)

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE**

3 **TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) affects cervids such as deer, elk, and
5 moose and has been detected in more than twenty states; and
6

7 **WHEREAS**, the states currently grappling with CWD are incurring significant costs to
8 respond to the disease, often requiring the wildlife management agencies to divert
9 limited resources from other vital activities; and
10

11 **WHEREAS**, bills proposed in the United States Senate and House of Representatives
12 would fund crucial CWD research and provide federal support to states to address and
13 contain the spread of CWD.
14

15 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
16 Legislatures urges swift enactment of federal legislation such as the Chronic Wasting
17 Disease Management Act (H.R. 4454, 115) or the Chronic Wasting Disease Support for
18 States Act (S. 2252, 115) that will provide federal resources that are crucial to
19 effectively address this multi-state wildlife management crisis.

COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**POLICY: ENCOURAGING CONGRESS TO SUPPORT THE
EMERGING CONSERVATION ECONOMY**

TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, one of the growth industries is the conservation economy which is a result of natural resource management practices that better manage the country's diverse bioregional conservation economies; and

WHEREAS, we live in a time of tremendous change, the extent of which is the subject of intense debate around the world, that recognizes the clash of immediate human needs of food and water with current practices that have a long-term impact on the land and water's capacity to support life, livelihoods, and traditional lifestyles including local and indigenous subsistence living; and

WHEREAS, increasing population and migration of people across the country strains each State's biodiversity and the current management of land and water is being evaluated because there is a sense of urgency to understand the impacts, among other things, or storm water run-off, rain acidity, wastewater, and fish farms; and

WHEREAS, new initiatives related to natural resource management are integrating innovative science, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), clean technology and green initiatives, as an example, and are encouraging new career pathways, advancing STEM jobs in conservation; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing need for a STEM workforce to advance knowledge of nature's ecosystem and growing demand for new partnerships to be established across the country between federal agencies, state agencies, NGOs, conservationists, scientists, consumers, producers, urban planners, entrepreneurs, and local and indigenous organizations to share their expertise, tools, and resources to achieve

socio, financial, and economic prosperity through stewardship of natural resources for future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) acknowledges new technology exists, such as wireless devices, advanced satellite monitoring, embedded microprocessors, weather stations, drones, and robots that monitor, test, or collect data to enhance natural resource management in a manner that improves efficiency, creates new jobs, and revolutionizes how we access locations previously too costly and dangerous; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL supports the conservation economy in which economic wealth is harvested from a bioregion's natural resources in a way that meets local communities' needs and does not lessen the natural and social health and well-being of a bioregion; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL supports the development of an educated workforce to support the conservation economy and an increase in commerce related to research, innovation and development of new technologies to better manage natural resources and the country's diverse bioregional economies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL encourages Congress to fund the advancement of education, research, innovation and technology, and to collaborate with businesses and organizations that create jobs to meet the growing conservation economy.

1 **COMMITTEE:** NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

2 **POLICY:** ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

3 **TYPE:** DRAFT RESOLUTION

4 **WHEREAS**, environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful
5 involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with
6 respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws,
7 regulations, and policies; and

8
9 **WHEREAS**, all people desire to live in good health, in communities with access to
10 nutritious foods, green spaces, clean air, drinkable water, reliable infrastructure and
11 government services, and economic opportunity; and

12
13 **WHEREAS**, communities of color and economically-disadvantaged communities have
14 historically shouldered the burdens of pollution and its toxic impacts on health, air,
15 water, and land; and

16
17 **WHEREAS**, lack of investment in storm water infrastructure causes basement flooding,
18 sewer backups, and water contamination that disproportionately affect economically-
19 disadvantaged communities; and

20
21 **WHEREAS**, lack of access to fresh, local, healthy food contributes to poor health
22 outcomes such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease throughout communities of color
23 and economically-disadvantaged communities; and

24
25 **WHEREAS**, communities of color face barriers of access to green open space and the
26 health and recreational benefits provided therein; and

28 **WHEREAS**, access to employment, economic investment, economic mobility, and
29 training opportunities are unequal across the nation, with minority, low-income, and rural
30 communities having least access to these opportunities; and
31

32 **WHEREAS**, economically-challenged communities across the United States - urban,
33 semi-urban, and rural - together face environmental injustices; and
34

35 **WHEREAS**, the states must serve and protect their residents and contend with the
36 adverse effects environmental injustice has on communities within their borders, and
37

38 **WHEREAS**, addressing environmental justice has been a national priority for over two
39 decades, as first outlined in the 1994 Executive Order 12898 on Federal Actions to
40 Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations;
41 and
42

43 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
44 Legislators urges the President of the United States and Members of Congress to
45 earnestly implement policies within the federal agencies and their programs that
46 inculcate a culture of environmental justice and an awareness of the hurdles faced by
47 communities of color and economically-disadvantaged communities; and
48

49 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the federal agencies should both maintain and
50 strengthen aid to states, through either grants or technical services, to support their
51 efforts to protect and empower environmental justice communities; and
52

53 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that certified copies of this Resolution be sent to the
54 President of the United States and to all Members of the 115th Congress.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: OFFSHORE DRILLING**

3 **TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, the proposed federal National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing
5 Program for 2019-2024 seeks to expand oil and gas exploration, production, and drilling
6 in the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and Gulf of Mexico; and
7

8 **WHEREAS**, the Administration has pursued efforts to roll back certain enforcement and
9 regulatory capacity of the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement for offshore
10 drilling activities under the Well Control Rule; and
11

12 **WHEREAS**, Florida's coasts were previously removed from the proposed program, a
13 decision based on potential threats that offshore drilling would impose on coastal
14 tourism and rural economies; and
15

16 **WHEREAS**, similar to Florida, other states on the U.S. coasts are heavily reliant on
17 tourism, the maritime sector, and fisheries, which are particularly critical in coastal and
18 rural communities; and
19

20 **WHEREAS**, coastal states have been previously impacted by spills such as the BP
21 Deepwater Horizon explosion that killed 11 people, caused a massive oil spill that
22 leaked 3.19 million barrels of oil and gas into the Gulf of Mexico for 87 days, and
23 resulted in \$247 million in losses to the commercial fishing industry; and
24

25 **WHEREAS**, the probability of these spills occurring only increases if coastlines are
26 opened to offshore drilling under the proposed plan and oversight of drilling activities
27 diminished.

28 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President of the United States is
29 respectfully urged to withdraw his proposal to open portions of the Atlantic, Pacific, and

30 Gulf Coasts for oil and natural gas drilling, or offer the opportunity for each coastal state
31 to opt-out of this expansion, as such drilling would put coastal economies and the
32 environment at needless risk of grave harm; and

33
34 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President of the United States and Congress
35 are respectfully urged to maintain the current regulatory enforcement of standards and
36 oversight of existing and future offshore drilling activities; and

37
38 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted
39 to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, the Secretary of the
40 United States Department of the Interior, the President of the United States Senate, the
41 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress.

1 **COMMITTEE:** **NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY:** **OPPOSITION TO THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL**
3 **PROTECTION AGENCY’S PROPOSED**
4 **ROLLBACK OF FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE**
5 **EMISSION STANDARDS**

6 **TYPE:** **DRAFT RESOLUTION**

7 **WHEREAS**, the federal Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Standards, the Corporate
8 Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards, and the waiver allowing California vehicle
9 emissions standards to be more stringent than those of the federal government have
10 saved tens of thousands of American lives, reduced U.S. carbon emissions by millions
11 of tons of CO₂, and saved American motorists billions of dollars in fuel costs; and
12

13 **WHEREAS**, these programs and the waiver authority are under the jurisdiction of the
14 federal Clean Air Act and have contributed to a modern automobile that lasts longer,
15 requires far fewer tune-ups, pollutes the air considerably less, and requires less fuel to
16 operate; and
17

18 **WHEREAS**, twelve states and the District of Columbia have joined in adopting the more
19 stringent California vehicle emissions standards; and
20

21 **WHEREAS**, if fuel efficiency had not improved from 2005 through 2015, including as a
22 result of the current standards adopted in 2012, households would have spent 25
23 percent more on fuel; and
24

25 **WHEREAS**, even with the slightly higher purchase price attributable to incorporating the
26 technology required to comply with the 2012 standards, the average new vehicle buyer
27 starts saving during the first month of ownership; and
28

29 **WHEREAS**, the International Council on Clean Transportation recently found that, due to
30 technological improvements and innovation, compliance costs for model years 2022–
31 2025 will be 34 percent to 40 percent lower than originally projected; and

32
33 **WHEREAS**, auto manufacturers are already complying with the 2012 standards, and
34 more than one-half of the new vehicles introduced in 2017 already meet the 2020 level
35 of the standards, and 32 percent comply with the 2025 level; and

36
37 **WHEREAS**, Synapse Energy Economics has reported that the 2022 and 2025
38 standards will create more than 100,000 U.S. jobs in the auto industry by 2025 and
39 more than 250,000 by 2035; and

40
41 **WHEREAS**, the American Lung Association recently released a poll showing that voters
42 overwhelmingly support the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) current fuel
43 efficiency standards for cars, SUVs, and light trucks in model years 2022 to 2025, and
44 the poll also found that nearly seven in 10 voters want the EPA to leave current fuel
45 efficiency standards in place.

46
47 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
48 Legislatures (NCSL) supports current standards and opposes EPA’s proposal to roll
49 back any of the GHG emissions standards or CAFE Standards or to revoke the
50 emissions waiver granted to California under the Clean Air Act, and be it further; and

51
52 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, NCSL send a copy of this resolution to the EPA
53 Administrator, NHTSA Administrator, and the United States Congress.

COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY: RENEWABLE ENERGY

TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, human activity has caused an alarming increase in greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, primarily produced by the use of fossil fuels, which has resulted in a rapidly warming globe; and

WHEREAS, warming temperatures have already caused sea level to rise half a foot in recent decades, accelerating the coastal erosion, costing upwards of \$500 million per year in property losses.

WHEREAS, ocean acidity has already grown about thirty percent, contributing to widespread coral bleaching and reef loss, shrinking fisheries, and devaluing a natural resource supporting 1.6 million jobs in the U.S. economy; and

WHEREAS, a warming climate has already led to increasingly frequent and intense hurricanes, including a record 17 named hurricanes and tropical storms nearing or hitting the U.S. in 2017, with three major hurricanes making landfall and causing an estimated \$265 billion in damages; and

WHEREAS, industrial emitters have traditionally been allowed to freely emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air, effectively passing the costs of mitigation and cleanup onto taxpayers, prompting action to encourage the replacement of fossil fuels with renewable energy which has already led to successful progress in reducing costs for consumers, creating jobs, and improving the environment; and

WHEREAS, 57 percent of all residential buildings in U.S. are suitable for solar installation that could generate nearly 75 percent of the current residential electricity

consumption, potentially saving consumers money on their utility bills and creating a growth market that produces thousands of jobs; and

WHEREAS, wind power capacity has tripled in the past decade, supplying 6.3 percent of the nation's electricity in 2017 and supporting 105,500 jobs across the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, 29 states have already established renewable portfolio standards to expand deployment of renewable energy technologies and grow their economies; and

WHEREAS, because fossil fuels are a commodity whose price will rise as supplies become more difficult to extract, and renewable energy is a technology whose price will decrease as innovation reduces costs, states will increasingly stand to benefit by switching to renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, taxpayers in all states stand to benefit by reducing carbon pollution driving climate change, whose mitigation and adaptation costs are passed on to consumers as federal, state, and local governments are forced to spend additional resources fighting increasing sea level rise, drought, and natural disasters.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) believes the federal government should safeguard and expand upon established tax incentives and grant programs for renewable energy technologies, and pursue efforts to make the U.S. a 100 percent clean and renewable energy economy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL believes the federal government should establish programs to assist states with providing retraining and meaningful support to workers in the fossil fuel sector to ensure their future we transition the market from fossil fuels to renewable energy; and

59 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the
60 President of the United States and to all of the members of the 115th Congress.

1

COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**POLICY: REDUCING BARRIERS OF SMART COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE ADVANCEMENT**

TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Smart Community technologies can strengthen America’s cities, states and regions by improving the overall quality of life, economic opportunity, and security for those who live in America’s communities; and

WHEREAS, the development and deployment of Smart Community technologies in the communication, energy, and transportation sectors provides new opportunities to increase overall public health and facilitates economic growth across urban and rural communities; and

WHEREAS, such Smart Community innovation encompasses a range of technological solutions to modernize and improve the delivery of state and local government services; and

WHEREAS, Smart Community technologies can achieve community goals, such as increasingly clean and efficient transportation, improved energy management, integration of distributed and renewable energy resources, increase access to better quality broadband connectivity and enhanced transportation mobility; and

WHEREAS, partnerships between state and local governments and the private sector can support ‘Smart Community’ innovations across all communities and help overcome resource constraints and impediments, and facilitate the efficient coordination of services; and

WHEREAS, these public-private partnerships can help accelerate Smart Community advancements and new technology deployments that benefit residents and constituents

30 across cities, states, and regions; and ensure that Smart Community technologies are
31 efficiently integrated and provide maximum benefit to the communities they serve; and
32

33 **WHEREAS**, the infrastructure of the communications, energy, and transportation
34 sectors are not only interconnected, but serve as the foundational elements to enable
35 the deployment of new Smart Community technologies in all communities.
36

37 **THEREFORE**, agencies, such as the Department of Transportation, Federal
38 Communications Commission, Federal Aviation Administration, the Department of
39 Agriculture and the Department of Energy should fund grant programs and opportunities
40 for state and local governments that support efficient investments in Smart
41 Communities.
42

43 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
44 Legislatures (NCSL) believes that federal policymakers, agencies, regulators should
45 continue to work with state and local levels of government, as well as partners from the
46 communications, energy and transportation sectors, to develop policies that facilitate
47 and accelerate the development and deployment of Smart Community technologies that
48 can maximize benefits for all communities at the local, state, and regional levels.
49

50 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL supports additional federal funding toward
51 the development of Smart Communities, and that the Department of Transportation
52 should re-launch the 2015 Smart City Challenge, and expand the number of
53 communities eligible to receive awards across the nation.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

2 **POLICY: RURAL MENTAL HEALTH**

3 **TYPE: DRAFT RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, farmers and ranchers, due to the nature of their work and a shortage of
5 resources for rural mental health, suffer higher rates of depression and suicide than
6 other professions; and

7
8 **WHEREAS**, difficult economic conditions are placing additional strain on our nation's
9 farmers and ranchers and their families. The United States Department of Agriculture
10 projects that net farm income will fall once again in 2018, continuing a sustained
11 downward trend that began in 2014; and

12
13 **WHEREAS**, the federal government can play a vital role in addressing this crisis by
14 providing the states with additional resources for rural mental health services that are
15 tailored to the unique needs of farmers, ranchers, and their families

16
17 **NOW, THEREFORE, IT BE RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
18 Legislatures urges Congress to include in the pending Farm Bill, funding for states to
19 address this urgent need and assist our nation's farmers, ranchers, and their family
20 members during this time of great financial stress in American agriculture.