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Res. No. 208

Resolution calling on corporate and government entities operating in New York City to divest from agricultural industries that benefit from deforestation and the acceleration of global warming.

By Council Member Brannan

Whereas, On April 18, 2019, the Council passed the New York City Climate Mobilization Act, targeting energy sources and greenhouse gas emissions and requiring an eighty percent reduction in citywide emissions by 2050 to offset the globe's changing climate; and

Whereas, On June 20, 2019, the New York State legislature passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, to require statewide reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and achieve net zero emissions in all sectors of the state economy by 2050; and

Whereas, According to the University of Michigan's Center for Sustainable Systems, the production of food accounts for 83% of all carbon dioxide equivalent emissions associated with food consumption in U.S. households, with nearly half of all food-based emissions stemming from livestock; and

Whereas, According to a 2018 article published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science entitled "Reducing Food's Environmental Impacts Through Producers and Consumer," producing one pound of beef alone requires 592 square feet of land on average; and

Whereas, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has stated the global consumption of beef is rising at a rate of 5% annually; and

Whereas, Earlier this year, to cope with rising demands for beef, Brazilian farmers set fires in the Amazon rainforest to clear land for more cattle farms, as reported by Brazil's National Institute for Space

Research, which captured satellite images of 41,000 fire spots across the country; and

Whereas, According to the New York Times, the Amazon's rainforest is now burning at record rates, with an 80% increase of forest fires since 2018, straining the earth's ability to store carbon and produce oxygen; and

Whereas, Members of the European Union have condemned the destruction of the Amazon rainforest by cattle farmers and called for an urgent review of the possibility of banning Brazilian beef imports for their connection to environmental damage; and

Whereas, According to the Center for International Policy's Mighty Earth Campaign, soy products have a related effect on global deforestation, as 75% of the world's soy is used as feed for raising livestock including chicken and fish across the globe; and

Whereas, In 2017, the Global Environmental Change Journal described the rising global demand for soybean production as an underlying driver of global deforestation, as pressure mounted for farmers across South America to partake in large-scale forest-clearing to establish more cropland for soy cultivation; and

Whereas, According to the World Wildlife Fund, global supply-chains, shipments, and storage across international agricultural trading companies have created visible impacts on the world's climate as seen by the presence of increasing droughts and heatwaves; and

Whereas, The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization issued a statement entitled "Livestock a Major Threat to Environment," stating that animal agriculture is responsible for approximately 65% of all human-related nitrous oxide emissions, which causes heat to be trapped at an estimated rate 296 times stronger than carbon dioxide, and is guiding our global temperature towards a climate tipping point; and

Whereas, Many multinational corporations that distribute beef and soy products in New York City are not signatories to the New York Declaration on Forests, which ensures a commitment from companies to end deforestation by 2030; and

Whereas, Any buyer in New York City, be it a city agency, private corporation, or otherwise, should proactively uphold climate protections by refraining from purchasing agricultural products that fail to meet the sustainability standards set under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act; and

Whereas, In order to achieve the commitments made by New York City and State to reduce greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions in all sectors of the economy, it is imperative for public and private sectors to divest from agricultural industries that contribute to climate change; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on corporate and government entities operating in New York City to divest from agricultural industries that benefit from deforestation and the acceleration of global warming.

Session 13
LS #3210
01/17/2024

Session 12
NRC
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