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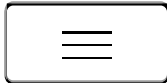


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Fields: A green agenda sails through at U.S. Conference of Mayors

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By Jess Fields - Special to the American-Statesman

As Americans grow weary of government overreach and intrusion, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has doubled down on supporting federal and local policies that restrict property rights in order to stop climate change.

This year's conference, which annually brings together mayors from American cities with populations greater

than 30,000, was held in Dallas at the Omni Hotel. More than 200 mayors, including 34 from Texas, were in attendance.

The mayors endorsed a slate of policies calling for government action in pursuit of a “green agenda” that disregards property rights in favor of environmentalist purity. On climate change, the mayors took a hard line in favor of sweeping government action. Although every mayor had the right to pull a resolution if they objected, not one expressed objection to any of the climate change resolutions.

In addition to passing a resolution that “commends the administration for its thorough National Climate Assessment,” the mayors recommended specific and tough government action on climate change.

The mayors called for the federal government to adopt policies and regulations that non-residential and multifamily residential structures provide annual data as to their energy, water and other utility usage. In other words, they supported the federal government forcing private businesses to report how much energy and water they use. But that’s not all.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors also explicitly called upon the federal government to mandate not only monitoring of private energy use, but also government-mandated changes in how these private entities use energy, and how much.

When a municipality is empowered to impose restrictive sustainability laws on private businesses for the sake of the green agenda – even limiting how much energy they are allowed to use – property rights are out the window.

The same resolution calls for funding of “green energy initiatives,” including the use of smart meters. It goes on to “call on the administration to give high priority to the pursuit of international agreements to address global climate change.” In just one resolution, the mayors backed local, federal, and international laws to restrict how private property is used.

Sweeping action to fight climate change wasn’t the only area where the mayors supported expanding government power. The conference also passed, among many others, resolutions that supported the implementation of Common Core, continued subsidies for Amtrak, and federal grants for public housing.

With such ideas, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has clearly positioned itself on one side of the political spectrum. Instead of focusing on real issues that affect municipalities – such as the unfunded mandates that Washington hands down to local taxpayers, or how the Affordable Care Act is affecting healthcare costs for cities – the U.S. Conference of Mayors backs a vast expansion of federal and international power that would force cities to fall in line with an ideological agenda.

Jess Fields is a senior analyst with the Center for Local Governance at the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

In this Section

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