POSITION OF THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB

CLIMATE CHANGE

OCTOBER 13, 2020

SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW

As a leader in conservation for over 125 years, the Boone and Crockett Club has supported far-reaching conservation policies while continuing to adhere to its mission. The United States has benefited from the foresight of Club members Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and George Bird Grinnell. Thanks to these early leaders, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation became the bedrock for federal and state wildlife conservation and management.

Carbon emissions are causing rapid warming and altering wildlife habitat and their wildlife populations at a sizeable scale. Understanding about climate change is accelerating. Data in the United States shows that sea level is rising, heat waves and storm events are growing in severity, and various timing cues or ranges for vegetation and wildlife are shifting. Hunters are attuned to fluctuations in and stresses on big game populations and their habitat, and are seeing firsthand significant, negative impacts to our forests, streams, and coastlines. The Club is concerned that wildlife and its habitat may not have the ability to adapt to these observed rapid changes unless action is taken soon.

Momentum is building in the United States and worldwide to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Boone and Crockett Club applauds the work of governors, mayors, financial institutions, and business Chief Executive Officers in the United States who have set climate-smart goals and are making changes to meet those goals. Numerous coalitions of states, cities, and businesses strive to tackle climate change, and are bending the carbon curve.

The current trajectories for carbon emissions growth, energy usage, and development in human population centers, however, are unfavorable. The worldwide share of clean energy remains static at 20 percent, despite absolute growth. China, among other nations, is investing in massive coal use at home and abroad. In fact, inadequate commitments by other nations remain an obstacle to needed global reductions.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 allowed the study of unique data on the correlation between carbon emissions and economic activity. With 4 billion people staying home worldwide during the worst of the pandemic, the world carbon emissions total is expected to decrease between 5 to 8 percent for that year. That is a large drop; it is approximately equal to what most scientists agree needs to be cut each year (7.6 percent) in order to stop temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Unfortunately, the reduction in carbon emissions caused by the severe worldwide economic contraction also caused painful, even catastrophic, social and humanitarian issues. A goal to reduce carbon emissions cannot be accomplished by devastating nations' economies and exacerbating social and humanitarian challenges worldwide. The better goal is to make clean energy affordable for all parts of the world and focus on technology that can decarbonize global energy uses that will support social and economic well-being.

Position

The Boone and Crockett Club is committed to policies that reduce greenhouse gases and combat their effect on climate in accordance with its mission to conserve and sustain abundant wildlife populations and their habitat for future generations.

I. Reduce Carbon Emissions

Carbon Pricing. The Club supports the policy of governments and stakeholders setting and meeting goals to reduce carbon emissions through a market-based carbon price mechanism. Experts and economists suggest different ways to drive down carbon emissions, ranging from a tax on carbon to financial incentives. These and other options have serious supporters. A number of nations, and several states, have set a tax or price floor on carbon. These generally have led to net carbon reductions and, in most experts' opinions, with sufficient flexibility and economic protections.


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Renewable Energy. The Club has always supported the role of public lands in energy production consistent with wildlife and habitat conservation goals. Energy production has been one of the earliest and core purposes of these lands, and it has been successful; significant portions of the oil, natural gas, and coal produced in the United States comes from public lands and waters. Renewable energy production (e.g., wind, solar, geothermal, etc.) from public lands, however, is only at 5 percent of the United States total. A re-balancing toward efficient, renewable energy is needed to grow the economy. The federal government should accelerate the siting of efficient renewable energy on public lands but not in areas that contain priority habitats such as migration corridors or flyways (migratory birds have been notably impacted by such projects already).

Methane Capture. The Club maintains that our federal lands, while a great source of energy production, should also be a model of efficiency and quality. Federal and state governments should reduce a potent source of greenhouse gas emissions by curtailing methane leakage from oil and gas operations. One ton of methane, though shorter lived, traps many times more heat than one ton of carbon dioxide. Much of the methane escaping in the normal operation of oil and gas production can be captured with inspection and readily available technology. Strong progress recently is evidenced by industry implementation of standard procedures to reduce methane emissions on federal lands, which should be universally adopted.

II. Promote Natural Climate Solutions

Carbon Projects on Forests and Grasslands. The Club supports funding and incentives focused on natural climate solutions. Grasslands, forests, and farms could store 30 percent or more of needed carbon reductions according to the United Nations. Forests are particularly important because their carbon sequestration potential far exceeds other habitat types. United States forest lands are a significant carbon sink, currently offsetting 11 percent of total United States carbon emissions. Replanting forests, planting new forests, avoiding forest conversion, and improving forest management each delivers substantial carbon savings if implemented in the United States and worldwide. Healthy forests store more carbon than overstocked forests and have less risk of igniting into a catastrophic wildfire that releases many tons of carbon into the atmosphere. Sustainable, active management of forests, both public and private, would be a significant benefit to the climate, and to restoring millions

of acres of wildlife habitat. Improved grazing practices and nutrient management on farms, likewise, offer substantial carbon savings. All of these actions will grow the economy, and yield improved water quality and quantity, increased biodiversity, more habitat, and better flood buffering. Congress should address the litigation and red tape that currently hampers the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, and are counterproductive to that end. Congress should further fund and incentivize conservation and restoration of forests, grasslands, and wetlands, and carbon-friendly forest, farming, and ranching management practices.

Conservation of Wildlife Habitat. The Club supports cities, states, and the federal government advancing their approaches to climate change by directing funds (including revenue from a carbon price mechanism) for the conservation of wildlife habitat and open spaces. Evidence abounds of altered migration schedules, breeding seasons, growing zones, and occupied habitat areas due to the changing climate. Science can identify where and how to protect and enhance habitat to meet these changing needs; that is where new conservation investment must occur. Conservation of our natural resources has a ripple effect of driving more economic activity, and enjoyment of the outdoors that contributes to societal well-being.


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Curtail Tropical Deforestation. Deforestation is forest clearing for other uses such as settlement, mining, or farming. In the carbon-rich tropical forests, deforestation is responsible for 8 percent of the world's carbon emissions. The Club has long supported funding for conservation of these habitat types due to the important sequestering role that they play. The United States should take steps to curtail loss of tropical forests internationally, particularly from illegal logging.

III. Invest in Carbon Reduction Technologies

Utilize Innovative Forest Products. The Club supports greater utilization of innovative forest products in building construction, sharing the benefits of sequestered carbon in forests with urban areas. Buildings contribute 40 percent of global greenhouse gases annually. Heating and cooling buildings constitute a large part of this effect. The other half is from embodied carbon associated with concrete, steel, and other building materials that are produced under extremely high temperatures, and the transport of materials to construction sites. By 2060, the world is projected to double its floor area—in essence building a planet on top of the current planet. The use of forest products as the main structural material in buildings can have dramatic impact with widespread use, as is already occurring in Europe, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Federal, state, and local governments should adopt requirements to employ innovative forest products to reduce embodied carbon emissions in new public building construction, and ramp up sustainable forestry practices to ensure a net carbon reduction effect.


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Clean Energy Technology and Global Deployment. The Club believes clean energy technology will benefit the economy while reducing carbon emissions significantly. It will require more investment in applied research for disruptive clean energy technology advancements, including renewable energy sources and storage, and next generation nuclear energy. Tackling carbon emissions while sustaining economic growth requires clean energy technology to be scaled up and deployed among developed nations—and at an affordable price.

Conclusion

Climate change presents a global challenge that the world can overcome. Leadership at many levels is vital. The United States federal government must lead to ensure actions are taken worldwide to reduce carbon emissions. The Boone and Crockett Club maintains that the United States—with its global leadership position, innovation, and conviction—is poised to lead the effort in emissions reduction.

The Club and other hunting and conservation groups, along with individual hunters, shooters, and anglers, must support bold action to reduce carbon emissions. Annually, sportsmen and sportswomen invest hundreds of millions of dollars in wildlife and habitat conservation through their license fees, excise taxes, and charitable giving. They are central to the solutions, not only to protect this investment, but because of their immediate connections to the natural world and their history of overcoming enormous resource challenges. The Club maintains its position on climate change, though not comprehensive, but keeping with its mission, will go far in conserving wildlife and its habitat for generations to come.

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