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Bill Text

102nd Congress (1991-1992)

H.CON.RES.353.IH

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H.CON.RES.353 -- Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should assume a strong leadership role in implementing the decisions made at the Earth Summit by developing a national strategy... (Introduced in House - IH)

HCON 353 IH

102d CONGRESS

2d Session

H. CON. RES. 353

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should assume a strong leadership role in implementing the decisions made at the Earth Summit by developing a national strategy to implement Agenda 21 and other Earth Summit agreements through domestic policy and foreign policy, by cooperating with all countries to identify and initiate further agreements to protect the global environment, and by supporting and participating in a high-level United Nations Sustainable Development Commission.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

August 5, 1992

Ms. PELOSI (for herself, Mr. FASCELL, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. STUDDS, Mr. PORTER, Mr. SCHEUER, Mr. MILLER of Washington, Mrs. UNSOELD, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. SIKORSKI, Mr. GREEN of New York, Mr. BEILENSEN, Mr. BLAZ, Mr. HERTEL, Mr. FEIGHAN, and Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should assume a strong leadership role in implementing the decisions made at the Earth Summit by developing a national strategy to implement Agenda 21 and other Earth Summit agreements through domestic policy and foreign policy, by cooperating with all countries to identify and initiate further agreements to protect the global environment, and by supporting and participating in a high-level United Nations Sustainable Development Commission.

Whereas the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (hereinafter in this preamble referred to as `UNCED'), known as the Earth Summit, assembled in June of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the largest summit of heads of state in history and outlined a comprehensive action plan for environmentally sustainable development, known as Agenda 21;

Whereas the United States has a strong national interest in the environmental sustainability of global economic development, and many pressing environmental and economic problems are inherently transboundary and not susceptible to resolution by the actions of any single nation acting alone;

Whereas Agenda 21, a plan of national and international actions to integrate environment and development, negotiated and adopted by the United States and 177 other countries, offers a significant starting point for continuing progress in avoiding environmental degradation and social and economic disintegration in the 21st century;

Whereas the role of the United States, as a major economic force and a country that has long been in the forefront of environmental protection activities nationally and internationally, should be one of leadership and positive action in the implementation process of Agenda 21 and all decisions of UNCED;

Whereas Agenda 21 urges all governments to adopt national strategies for sustainable development;

Whereas Agenda 21 urges all countries to `make significant progress' in incorporating environmental costs into economic decisions, to undertake research or sustainable production methods and consumption patterns, and to undertake other actions to make their economies more environmentally sustainable;

Whereas Agenda 21 calls for a `supportive international climate for achieving environment and development goals,' by `providing adequate financial resources to developing countries and dealing with international debt,' and calls for `the reallocation of resources presently committed to military purposes' to support United States policies and the efforts of developing countries to implement Agenda 21;

Whereas UNCED recommended that a high-level United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (hereinafter in this preamble referred to as the `Commission') be established by the 47th United Nations General Assembly to provide a vital forum in which the member states of the United Nations may review progress made by considering reports from national governments, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations;

Whereas the United States was an active and positive participant in UNCED negotiations regarding the Commission, and will play a major role in the decisions of the 47th United Nations General Assembly regarding the specific modalities and effectiveness of the Commission;

Whereas the agreements adopted at UNCED are milestones toward the achievement of environmentally sustainable economic development and for holding governments accountable for progress toward integrating environment and development;

Whereas many opportunities for agreements concerning more extensive actions on critical issues remained unresolved at UNCED and will require further attention by the nations of the world; and

Whereas the ultimate success of achieving sustainable development and a healthy environment at the national and international levels depends upon actions taken at the State and local community levels, and on actions by schools, public offices, businesses, and citizens: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that--

(1) effective follow-up to achieve the many goals of the agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (hereinafter in this resolution referred to as `UNCED') will depend on the following actions by the President and the United States Government:

(A) The United States should adopt a national strategy for environmentally sustainable development, based on an extensive process of nationwide consultations with all interested organizations and individuals, including State and local governments, nongovernmental organization, businesses, and labor groups.

(B) The United States Government should encourage and facilitate, at all levels of community and sectors of society, appropriate means for adopting individual Agenda 21 plans of action, including the establishment of local, county, State, business, and other boards and commissions for achieving sustainable development. Each member of the Congress should help initiate this process within their States or districts.

(C) The President should establish an effective mechanism to plan, initiate, and coordinate United States policy for implementing Agenda 21. Responsibility should be vested in a duly constituted office, headed by an appropriate high level official, and the necessary staff support structure should be provided.

(D) Policies should be formulated for foreign policy and foreign assistance in order to help developing countries, and for domestic actions in order to assure appropriate action by the United States to implement Agenda 21;

(2) in order to contribute to a transition to a sustainable United States economy, the research and policy initiatives urged in Agenda 21 should be pursued, including research on sustainable consumption and production patterns, creation of a policy framework for sustainable consumption patterns, identification of a strategy to eliminate or reduce subsidies for unsustainable natural resource exploitation, and to improve pricing policies;

(3) the Congress should adopt a plan to reallocate an appropriate amount of savings from reduced defense spending in order to achieve its goals of global environmental protection and sustainable development over the next decade;

(4) the President should urge and actively participate in new and existing multilateral efforts aimed at creating a more favorable international economic climate for developing countries to practice sustainable development. Such efforts should include international consultations regarding reduction in developing country

debt linked with environmental policy reforms, and increased loans and concessional assistance upon development and implementation of national sustainable development strategies in developing countries;

(5) the United States should actively support, at the 47th United Nations General Assembly, the effective establishment of a high-level United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (hereinafter in this resolution referred to as the 'Commission'), including the establishment of provisions for meaningful participation by organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, and other relevant intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations recommended by UNCED;

(6) the President should affirm strong United States commitment to the Commission by appointing a high-level representative from the United States to the Commission, and by encouraging the United Nations Secretary General to appoint an Under Secretary General for Sustainable Development to coordinate the implementation of Agenda 21 in the United Nations system and who will head the secretariat support structure for the Commission;

(7) the President should submit a national report to the Commission on activities the United States has undertaken to implement Agenda 21, both domestically and internationally, on progress made toward fulfilling other commitments undertaken at UNCED, and on other environmental and developmental issues that the United States finds relevant, and should strongly encourage all United Nations members to submit national reports;

(8) the United States should call for periodic international meetings to continue the process toward developing and advancing international agreement to facilitate sustainable economic development for the protection of the global environment and the promotion of human dignity of current and future generations; and

(9) the President should submit an annual report to the Congress on the steps taken by the United States to implement Agenda 21 and the recommendations made by this resolution. The President should make information regarding such steps available to members of the Congress upon their request.

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