

S.J.RES.69 -- Providing for the United States to assume a strong leadership role in implementing the decisions made at the Earth Summit by developing a national strategy to implement Agenda 21 and... (Introduced in Senate - IS)

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Providing for the United States to 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 the high-level United Nations Sustainable Development Commission.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

March 24 (legislative day, MARCH 3), 1993

Mr. PELL (for himself, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. WELLSTONE) introduced the following joint resolution; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

JOINT RESOLUTION

Providing for the United States to 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 the high-level United Nations Sustainable Development Commission.

Whereas the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (hereinafter in this resolution 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 (hereinafter in this resolution referred to as `Agenda 21') for environmentally sustainable development (hereinafter in this resolution referred to as `sustainable development'); Whereas the United States has a strong national interest in the environmental sustainability of global economic development;

Whereas Agenda 21 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 should be one of leadership and positive action in the implementation process of Agenda 21 and all other 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 on 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 resolution referred to as the 'Commission') be established by the 47th United Nations General Assembly to provide a vital forum to review progress made by considering reports from national governments, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations;

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 Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
Effective follow-up to achieve the many goals of the agreements reached at UNCED will depend on the overall direction and action by the President and the Congress on the following:

(1) The President and the Congress 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 organizations, businesses, and labor groups.

(2) The President and the Congress 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.

(3) The President, Secretary of State, and the Congress should formulate initiatives and policies to help developing countries develop the capacity to implement Agenda 21. The Congress should restructure United States foreign assistance to provide a fundamental mandate for sustainable development.

(4) 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.

(5) In order to contribute to a transition to an environmentally sustainable United States economy, the research and policy initiatives urged in Agenda 21 should be pursued, including research on environmentally sustainable consumption patterns, identification of a strategy to eliminate or reduce subsidies for unsustainable natural resource exploitation, and move toward pricing policies that more truly reflect environmental costs.

(6) The Congress should adopt a system to reallocate an appropriate amount of savings from reduced defense spending in order to achieve the goals of Agenda 21 for global environmental protection and sustainable development over the next decade.

(7) The President should promote 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--

(A) reduction in developing country debt, linked with environmental policy reforms;

(B) focusing the work of multilateral donor consultative groups which now exist for each of some eighty developing countries on evaluation of, and support for, their national sustainable development strategies; and

(C) increasing loans and concessional assistance to developing countries where implementation of national sustainable development strategies are underway.

(8) The United States should actively support the Commission authorized by the 47th United Nations General Assembly. The United States should seek a strong role for

the Commission in the United Nations system to monitor and evaluate progress in meeting the goals identified in Agenda 21 and other decisions at UNCED. The United States should pursue a strong sustainable development mandate for all relevant activities of the United Nations and a catalytic role for the Commission in coordinating and facilitating the implementation of that mandate.

(9) The President should affirm strong United States commitment to the Commission by--

(A) appointing a high-level representative or delegation from the United States to the Commission, including, as appropriate, representation at the ministerial level and Congressional and non-government observers, and

(B) supporting the United Nations Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in coordinating the implementation of Agenda 21 in the United Nations system and heading the secretariat support structure for the Commission;

(10) The President should submit a national report to the Commission on--

(A) 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

(B) other environmental and developmental activities the United States has undertaken to strengthen agreements reached at UNCED.

The President should strongly encourage all United Nations members to submit such national reports.

(11) The United States should support rules of procedure for the Commission which ensure the active participation of nongovernmental organizations, based on the procedures used in UNCED as agreed in paragraphs 38.11 and 38.44 of Agenda 21, and should also encourage the active participation in the Commission of representatives of the international financial institutions, GATT, regional and subregional development banks and financial institutions, and regional economic integration organizations.

(12) 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, and should make information regarding such steps available to Members of the Congress upon their request.