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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Supervisors Ask State Legislators to Tax Carbon and Return Money to the People

September 13, 2023 - On Tuesday, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors voted to support Assembly Bill 858 (AB 858), known as the California Climate Cashback Program, and adopted a resolution endorsing a state-wide Carbon Fee and Dividend program. The resolution proposed by Supervisors Manu Koenig and Felipe Hernandez aims to put money in people's pockets to help them live sustainably. The money would come from the State's Cap and Trade program, a fee on carbon emissions, or other allocations by the legislature.

"Another climate disaster strikes every day. We need to stop nibbling around the edge of this problem. It's time to change the rules of our economy so that every purchasing decision is moving us towards a zero-emission future," said Supervisor Manu Koenig.

"Between recovering from last winter's storms and a variety of state and federal climate-centric rebates, we've seen that giving people money to adapt is both effective and necessary," said Supervisor Felipe Hernandez. "The programs we're asking our state legislators to create would give people the means to live safely and sustainably."

The Supervisors are not the first to call for carbon dividends. In 2019, a coalition of Nobel laureate economists and financial leaders, including four former Federal Reserve Chairs, Alan Greenspan, Ben Bernanke, Paul Volcker, and Janet Yellen, signed [a statement supporting carbon dividends](#) that was published in the Wall Street Journal. They noted that "the majority of American families, including the most vulnerable, will benefit financially by receiving more in 'carbon dividends' than they pay in increased energy prices.

California is the fourth largest economy in the world, recently surpassing Germany. It has also set itself the ambitious goal of being carbon neutral by 2045. At a time of divided government in Washington, a national carbon dividend program seems unlikely. However, it's within reach here in California. AB 858 The Climate Cashback Program is a two-year bill that would set up carbon dividends, but it hasn't yet specified a funding source.

"Robert Rivas, our new speaker in the state assembly, represents the town of Pajaro, which experienced a climate disaster firsthand. Now is the time for comprehensive climate legislation," said Supervisor Hernandez. "California can lead the way. The Board of Supervisors is letting our state legislators know this is important. We need them to act," added Supervisor Koenig.