



Washington Carbon Tax Measure Goes Down In Flames

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Washington state residents decisively rejected what could have been the first tax on carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the U.S.

The state's carbon tax, dubbed Initiative 732, was opposed by about 59 percent of voters, while only 41 percent supported it.

The measure was not endorsed by national environmental groups, like 350.org, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and The Sierra Club. In fact, some environmentalists have come out against the tax and promptly claimed credit for defeating the measure.

"We must combat climate change by transitioning from fossil fuels to clean energy," Vien Truong, Director of Green For All, said in a statement emailed to the Daily Caller News Foundation. "Initiative 732 rightfully aimed to put a price on carbon, but unjustly favored tax cuts for corporations over investments in clean energy and green job creation for struggling families and displaced workers. This defeat shows that Washingtonians recognized that I-732 is a false solution."

Carbon tax supporters have out-raised their opponents by three-to-one as they are backed by many environmentalists including actor Leonardo DiCaprio. Carbon tax opponents include the state's Democratic Party, numerous trade groups and unions, and even Van Jones, President Barack Obama's former green jobs czar.

If it had passed, Initiative 732 (I-732) would tax CO₂ emissions at \$15 per metric ton starting in July 2017. This tax would quickly rise to \$25 by 2018, then increased rapidly until it hits \$100 per metric ton. This tax will be offset by a 1 percent reduction in the state sales tax and increased tax credits to low-income families.

Washington's proposed carbon tax is supposed to be revenue neutral, but economists are torn over what the real-world effects of the tax would be. The carbon tax is modeled after British Columbia's, which was implemented in 2008.

Researchers at the libertarian Cato Institute found that carbon taxes cause considerably more economic damage than generic taxes do and disproportionately target the poor, so even a revenue-neutral carbon tax would probably reduce economic growth while doing little to fix global warming.