

**2010 -- H 7223**

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LC00426  
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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2010**

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**H O U S E   R E S O L U T I O N**

**RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES SENATE TO HOLD DIRTY COAL  
PLANTS ACCOUNTABLE IN THE SENATE ENERGY AND CLIMATE BILL**

Introduced By: Representatives Kilmartin, Pacheco, M Rice, Gallison, and Walsh

Date Introduced: January 26, 2010

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, Old, clunker coal plants must be required to meet smokestack-specific  
2 standards; and

3           WHEREAS, For the same reasons we require cars, air conditioners, and light bulbs to  
4 meet technology standards, we must also set standards for coal plants, the nation’s single largest  
5 source of global warming pollution; and

6           WHEREAS, If we are to transition smoothly to a clean energy economy and solve global  
7 warming, coal plants – old and new alike – must not be permitted to keep running on inefficient,  
8 decades-old technology; and

9           WHEREAS, The pollution cap will not be enough by itself to significantly cut pollution  
10 from coal plants in the next decade; and

11           WHEREAS, The cap alone is not sufficient because, consistent with the U.S. House-  
12 passed bill and legislation under development in the U.S. Senate, (1) the emissions ceiling likely  
13 will decline relatively slowly for the first decade of the program; (2) companies likely will  
14 receive free pollution allowances to cover most of their emissions; and (3) companies will be able  
15 to avoid reducing pollution at their plants by purchasing offsets generated by projects in the  
16 United States and abroad. Indeed, EPA’s analysis of the House-passed energy bill (which repeals  
17 New Source Review and New Source Performance Standards for carbon dioxide from existing  
18 coal plants) projects that only 6.9 percent of existing coal generation capacity will be retired by  
19 2025, with most of the retired capacity occurring at “marginal units with low capacity” that are

1 “part of larger plants that are expected to continue generating”; and

2 WHEREAS, Singling out existing stationary sources from complying with emissions and  
3 efficiency standards will give them a massive, unfair leg-up, tipping the market against clean  
4 sources like wind and solar; and

5 WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Energy projects that electricity demand will be  
6 relatively flat over the next twenty years (an annual average growth rate of less than one percent),  
7 even before considering the multitude of efficiency gains that would be achieved by the House-  
8 passed energy bill and other policies; and

9 WHEREAS, If electricity demand is flat and old coal plants don’t begin to retire, there  
10 will be a much smaller market for renewables. Indeed, the EPA’s analysis of the House-passed  
11 energy bill projects that coal will continue to provide nearly half of the nation’s electricity  
12 through at least 2025; and

13 WHEREAS, Companies will be perversely encouraged to keep operating – and even  
14 expand the operation of their oldest and dirtiest coal plants if they are exempted from modern  
15 pollution standards; and

16 WHEREAS, Under the House-passed energy bill, new plants would, in a few years, have  
17 to meet fairly stringent global warming limits, but old plants would not have to meet any  
18 smokestack-specific standards, even if they are expanded in ways that drive up pollution. This  
19 loophole invites the industry to ramp up their use of old, dirty coal plants instead of retrofitting  
20 them to reduce pollution or retiring the oldest dinosaurs to make way for renewable energy; and

21 WHEREAS, Moving to clean energy means leaving old, inefficient, and dirty technology  
22 behind; and

23 WHEREAS, Just as emissions standards for automobiles help ensure that the dirtiest  
24 clunkers on the highway are replaced with newer models, so would effective global warming  
25 pollution standards help ensure that clunker coal plants, many of them forty to fifty years old,  
26 don’t keep operating indefinitely; and

27 WHEREAS, Coal plants impose major costs on the environment and public health. The  
28 National Academy of Sciences has found that these ancient coal plants cost the U.S. economy  
29 tens of billions of dollars a year in public health damages. And in the meantime, countries like  
30 China speed ahead in the global renewable energy race; and

31 WHEREAS, Standards for clunker coal plants will require investment in America’s aging  
32 infrastructure that will create clean energy jobs. By requiring that outdated coal plants install  
33 modern technology to reduce global warming pollution, we will unleash innovation and put  
34 America’s workforce back in business; and

1           WHEREAS, We cannot stop the worst effects of global warming unless we start cutting  
2 pollution from coal plants now; and

3           WHEREAS, A recent report on “The Future of Coal” by the Massachusetts Institute of  
4 Technology makes clear that there is “no credible pathway toward GHG stabilization targets  
5 without emissions reductions from existing coal plants.” Steady reductions in pollution from coal  
6 plants are necessary to achieve the deep cuts in pollution that science already shows is necessary  
7 by 2030 and later; now, therefore be it

8           RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
9 Providence Plantations hereby respectfully urges Senate Majority Leader Reid, Senator Jack  
10 Reed, and Senator Sheldon Whitehouse to ensure that the Senate energy and climate bill  
11 preserves the Clean Air Act requirements that coal plants meet global warming pollution  
12 standards in order to fight global warming and repower America with clean energy; and be it  
13 further

14           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to  
15 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to The Honorable Harry Reid, U.S. Senate  
16 Majority Leader, The Honorable Jack Reed, U.S. Senate, and The Honorable Sheldon  
17 Whitehouse, U.S. Senate.

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