

1 **PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR THE JULY 2024 AFT CONVENTION:**

2  
3 Submitted by Nancy Romer, on behalf of the Environmental Justice Working Group

4  
5 **1. Support Decarbonization of Our Public Schools, Universities and Hospitals**  
6 **Through Inflation Reduction Act Funds**  
7

8 Whereas, the AFT has declared that we are in the middle of a climate emergency;  
9 and,

10 Whereas, unless we dramatically move away from using fossil fuels and toward  
11 renewable energy, we will succumb to the worst case scenario of climate crisis,  
12 harming the future of our families, our students and our planet; and,

13 Whereas, public school, university and hospital buildings are enormous energy  
14 consumers and contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions; and,

15 Whereas, burning fossil fuels to heat and cool buildings is the source of 31% of all  
16 U.S. carbon emissions; and is the school and hospital administrator's highest cost  
17 after staffing; and,

18 Whereas, burning fossil fuels causes multiple long term health issues, including  
19 asthma, cancer, and contributes to heart disease; and,

20 Whereas, the federal Inflation Reduction Act will reimburse public schools,  
21 universities and hospitals up to 60% for the cost of clean energy projects, and can  
22 now receive "direct pay" payments once projects are completed instead of tax  
23 credits and,

24 Whereas, these savings will free up resources for the primary missions of schools,  
25 universities and hospitals; and,

26 Whereas, because the AFT is profoundly concerned with long-term equity, it is  
27 imperative that disadvantaged communities benefit from the transition to clean  
28 energy and not be left behind as the climate crisis intensifies as; and,

29 Whereas, the benefits of transitioning to limitless clean energy (whether solar,  
30 wind, geothermal) are manifold:

- 31 ● clean and healthy environments improve student learning, educational
- 32 outcomes, and staff retention;
- 33 ● cleaner air reduces asthma and sick days;
- 34 ● schools and universities powered by clean energy can double as climate-
- 35 resilient emergency shelters as we face more extreme weather due to
- 36 climate change;
- 37 ● transitioning public schools, universities and hospitals will create jobs and
- 38 job training opportunities for residents;
- 39 ● reducing carbon emissions saves enormous amounts of energy and money,
- 40 ultimately projects to pay for themselves; and

41 **Therefore, Be It Resolved That,**

42 The AFT encourage all locals to participate in local coalitions and efforts to  
43 advance implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act to transition their  
44 schools, universities and hospitals to clean energy alternatives; and

45 The AFT and its locals pressure the States to do more to enable every community  
46 to make the energy transition especially by making no-interest loans available for  
47 up-front costs for decarbonization for public schools, universities, and hospitals;  
48 and

49 The AFT and its locals prioritize low income communities that are, in general,  
50 more vulnerable to the predicted ravages of climate change and more likely to  
51 experience the high asthma rates associated with burning fossil fuels; and,

52 The AFT and its locals urge and support efforts to ensure our young people  
53 engage in robust, meaningful, interdisciplinary climate change and climate justice  
54 curricula with the goal of preparing students to participate productively and  
55 responsibly in a rapidly changing world, and in emerging green, sustainable  
56 professions; and

57 The AFT advance this work through articles in *American Teacher* and state-wide  
58 communications, paving the way for AFT locals to join coalitions and organize for  
59 cities, towns, counties and states to support and facilitate the efforts to  
60 implement the IRA in our public schools, universities and hospitals.

61 \_\_\_\_\_  
62

63 Note: How it works is straightforward. Projects receive up to 30% of a clean  
64 energy project's cost as a base credit. After that, projects can qualify for an  
65 additional 10% domestic content bonus credit if they procure more than 40% of  
66 their materials from U.S. manufacturers. Low-income communities (in census  
67 tracts with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent) receive an additional 10% credit.  
68 Lastly, communities in census tracts near recently closed coal fired power plants  
69 or brownfield sites qualify for another 10% credit. [The Center for Public](#)  
70 [Enterprise notes](#) the many tax credits schools can access.

71 Adding the IRA's tax credits accelerates the transition to clean energy and makes  
72 more projects cost-effective within a given time horizon. A local government can  
73 "stack" IRA credits with other sources of support. States should be looking to help  
74 local governments maximize their ability to take advantage of these credits by  
75 providing support. Swiftly transitioning to clean energy will save money and free  
76 up resources for schools' primary mission while reducing fossil fuel reliance.

77 Additional Information:

78 BlueGreen Alliance's [Public Buildings Roadmap](#) for additional federal funding available  
79 for schools.

80 BlueGreen Alliance's [Direct Pay User Guide](#) for Schools and Nonprofits for more details  
81 on qualifying for clean energy project reimbursements.

82 BlueGreen Alliance's [Domestic Content User Guide](#) on how to meet the requirements to  
83 qualify for direct pay

84

85