



ABA Encourages Climate Change Legislation, Adaptation And Mitigating Action

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At the 2019 American Bar Association (ABA) Annual Meeting in August, the ABA's policy-making body adopted a resolution urging federal, state, local, territorial and tribal governments to take action to address climate change – including a reduction of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions to “net zero or below as soon as possible, consistent with the latest peer-reviewed science.” The climate change resolution ([Resolution 111](#)) includes as a goal “holding the increase in the global average temperature to the lowest possible increase above pre-industrial levels[.]”

The resolution continues by urging that the United States engage and participate in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as other international treaties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. It encourages Congress to enact market-based legal mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consider ways to encourage adaptation to climate change throughout the private sector and all levels of government.

The resolution also identifies the following components as needs in climate change policy: encouraging and enabling adaptation to climate change by both the private and public sectors, promoting economic development, and transitioning communities dependent on the carbon economy.

Finally, as part of Resolution 111, the ABA encourages lawyers to engage in pro bono activities to address climate change, and “to advise their clients of

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the risks and opportunities that Climate Change provides.”

Members of the ABA's Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources were involved in developing the [underlying report](#) supporting Resolution 111, which cites the environmental, security, economic, and social risks associated with climate change as a basis for the resolution. This is not the first climate change resolution adopted by the ABA; the first ABA climate change resolution was adopted over ten years ago. However, the updated Resolution 111 differs from the first by underscoring the urgency of action needed, and calling for a wider governmental and private sector response to climate change – including a greater role for lawyers in addressing climate change.