



JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

Policy Statement on National Oil Independence

Approved by the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, May 12, 2009.

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Northern California of San Francisco, etc. (JCRC) supports development of a U.S. policy to achieve independence from imported oil. The U.S. imports approximately 60% of its oil. Such oil dependence and the related risks of supply interruption pose grave threats to America's national security and economic strength, and to the stability of the global economy. America's dependence on imported oil constrains foreign policy, limits military options and is at the core of the economic and geopolitical instability that challenge security to both the U.S. and Israel. The future strength and stability of our national economy and the continued independence of our international policy decisions requires that we end the massive transfer of our financial resources to oil producing countries. The United States cannot effectively defend and support our allies while simultaneously providing financial resources to hostile regimes through the purchase of oil. We must not postpone urgent and effective action on long-term energy security and oil independence; the dangers from failing to implement a policy of oil independence are too great.

The JCRC urges that the United States as a nation, we in the Jewish community, and each of us individually, set as a primary goal the implementation of a comprehensive energy policy aimed at a substantial reduction in U.S. dependence on oil. Reducing the nation's vulnerability will entail important and difficult balancing among strategic, economic and environmental priorities that will require national consensus. The goal should be to have policies that preserve economic growth while limiting environmental consequences, particularly those related to air and water quality, and climate change. The policy must mandate that U.S. investment in energy research, development, deployment and commercialization be expanded and accelerated. Moreover, the U.S. must recognize that fuel diversity in the transportation sector is the key to energy security. As part of its strategy, the U.S. must steadily reduce its demand for oil as it transitions away from oil as its primary transportation fuel. Our country must have a sustained commitment to transforming our oil consumption patterns regardless of the fluctuations in the price of oil, and we should strive to be energy independent within ten years.

The JCRC recognizes that essentially there will be two stages to implement this policy; a near-term phase during which we will continue to rely on oil in our transportation sector and a longer-term phase in which we achieve a post-oil transportation sector.

In the long term, achieving independence from foreign oil will involve conservation and the development and implementation of new technologies that will transform the transportation sector from one dependent on cars and trucks that burn oil based fuel to a diversified system in which vehicles are powered by a variety of energy sources including advanced biofuels and electricity. JCRC strongly supports policies directed at developing and encouraging domestic production of these new technologies and alternatives as rapidly, but as responsibly, as possible. Particular attention must be given in this policy to avoiding environmental damage or risk from the use of new technologies. *JCRC believes that the development of new technologies is of the greatest national importance and it should be one of the highest priorities for our government in*

the coming years. By pursuing this policy, the U.S. will also create many new and important jobs and strengthen our economy at a time when it is facing serious economic problems. JCRC supports efforts and policies that encourage private and government cooperation both domestically and internationally, and that foster mutual support and partnerships in these areas to create, enhance and finance the development and rapid implementation of these new technologies to achieve independence from foreign oil.

In particular, JCRC is encouraged that Israel is an international leader in the development of these new technologies. We support and encourage greater cooperation between the U.S. and Israel at the governmental and private industry levels to further these goals.

JCRC encourages our local and state governments to make smarter and more compact land use decisions and to continue funding for public transportation in order to decrease our energy needs and reduce our dependency on foreign oil.

JCRC recognizes that even assuming rapid progress toward increased biofuel production and vehicle electrification; we will still require significant quantities of oil in the near term even with strong conservation programs. During this transition period, the U.S. may have to increase domestic production of oil and natural gas, while also placing a heightened priority on conservation. Such efforts must incorporate stringent environmental and other safeguards, but they must also be propelled by an understanding of the serious security, economic and political hazards posed by a dependence on foreign oil. JCRC supports the idea that these near-term efforts be marked by an expansion of conservation and efficiency in the use of oil, the development and utilization of domestic oil reserves in an environmentally appropriate manner, modernization of our domestic energy infrastructure, cooperation among state and federal agencies, and creation of greater public awareness and education about this issue.

JCRC is sensitive to the potential negative impact that certain energy policies may have on the economically disadvantaged, and JCRC supports programs to provide energy aid to low-income households, the elderly and disabled individuals to help them meet their energy needs.

The American public, and our Jewish community, must be educated about the risks to the security and stability of our country caused by our dependence on imported oil, and about the urgency of conserving energy resources in all aspects of our economy and daily lives. We call for a commitment from the JCRC, the Jewish community, and other civic and religious groups, in coordination with government, industry, universities, and research groups, to further such education among their own constituencies and to press our federal, state and local officials for urgently needed action towards the articulation and implementation of this multi-faceted energy policy.