

The Declaration on Energy Choice & Competition

A Civil Society Call for all Leaders of Governments, States & Nations to Remove Barriers to Affordable, Reliable and Clean Energy

We, members of civil society, and representatives of civil society organizations from across the world, first gathering in New York City - the site of Thomas Edison's first electrical lighting system and commercial scale power plant - now join together with all present and future signatories, to call upon all leaders of governments, states and nations to undertake practical policy reforms that will improve the lives of billions of people by removing barriers to access to affordable, reliable, clean energy. In support of this declaration, and as more fully detailed in print editions, we offer these simple observations:

Clean Energy Saves Lives - Each year, around 2.7 million people die as a result of indoor air pollution caused by burning dirty fuels - such as wood, dung, coal and kerosene - for cooking, heat and light. Another 4 million people die from outdoor air pollution, also caused in part by the use of dirty fuels.

Reliable, Inexpensive Energy Promotes Economic Development - Yet, over 800 million people currently have no access to electricity and many more lack access to reliable electricity. This impedes, and may prevent, economic development.

Reliable, Inexpensive Energy Eases Adaptation to Climate-Related Problems - Most of the problems associated with climate change, such as access to adequate nutrition, clean water and sanitation, vector-borne diseases, natural disasters, and direct harms from heat, are here now, and can be reduced through access to clean, reliable, affordable energy.

Innovative, Reliable, Affordable, Low-Emission Energy and Affordable Energy-Efficient Products are Essential for Cost Effective Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions - Global GHG emissions continue to rise. For global GHG emission reductions to become realistic, barriers to the adoption of innovative, affordable, lower-carbon technologies and affordable energy products must be removed.

Access to improved Clean, Reliable, Affordable Energy is Best Achieved by Maximizing Choice and Competition - Choice and competition drive innovation, as producers strive to deliver better quality at lower prices. To lower costs, producers reduce inputs, such as energy. Over time, this dynamic has driven a trend towards lower carbon emissions per unit of output. More so in competitive power markets, as found in Texas, Chile, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. Studies show competitive US state markets have delivered faster decarbonization at a lower cost, compared to monopoly markets, since 1997. These results make sense, because innovations spread faster, and policy incentives work better, if markets are open, not closed.

Barriers to Choice and Competition in Energy Generation and Distribution are Contrary to our Human Rights - From the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone derives a right to produce, buy, trade or use the energy of their choice, and products using the energy technology of their choice, so long as doing so is reasonably clean and safe and does not infringe on the rights of others. Yet, today, billions of people are very much impeded in such use, through actions that are blatantly discriminatory, often through state preferences for energy technology and companies, or through regulation that block access to technologies (such as micro grids) that would better enable individuals to protect themselves.

Local Efforts to Advance Energy Choice and Competition will be Aided Greatly if Local, State & National Leaders Unite in Commitment to Such Energy Market Freedoms.

Thus, observing that:

Whereas access to clean, reliable, affordable energy is essential for human flourishing - and to enable more effective mitigation of and adaptation to diverse climate change risks.

Whereas choice and competition empower and broaden access to clean, reliable, affordable energy.

Whereas choice and competition in energy generation, transmission and distribution are necessary for full protection of our human rights.

We hereby do Declare that: In order to improve access to clean, reliable, affordable energy for all, and thereby reduce harmful air pollution, improve access to clean water and sanitation, reduce disease, improve productivity, and enable more rapid innovation and economic development, as well as more rapid and effective mitigation of and adaptation to diverse climate change risks, we now call upon leaders of all governments, states and nations to commit substantially to reduce within and between nations, not only government sanctioned barriers to choice and competition in energy markets, but also similar barriers to cleaner and more efficient products and energy innovations.

First Signed and So Declared, in Council on November 5, 2019, and Then Thereafter, by: