

January 4, 2010

Dear Members of the Policy Council,

Thank you for your feedback on the Carbon Neutral System Dynamics Conferences proposal. We learned much from this discussion and did our best to refine the proposal. In spite of some strong and valid objections, we retained the essence of the proposal, that a carbon offsetting fee be included in the cost of conference registration, but that individual registrants be allowed to opt "out," if they so wish.

Based upon your input, we found it useful to justify the proposal publicly, in the form of a "proclamation." At this time, we submit to you a working DRAFT, as well as a documentation of the discussion (in this listserv, and in the Environmental SIG and SD Forums).

We submit this proposal to you in the spirit of corporate social responsibility, and to correct for a negative externality associated with hosting our conferences annually. We do not expect all to agree with this proclamation, but we promote it because we believe it represents the thinking of a majority of Society members. We trust the Policy Council with the evaluation of this initiative, and with the decision to carry it forward in the form of a motion.

This is not an emotional initiative. It is, instead, a natural evolution in the process of thinking about the global problem of climate change, and finding an actionable item that is within our reach, as a community. Individually we can do much more, and probably we should. Collectively, we can correct for an externality that is contributing to global misfortune.

We are not making a political statement per se, although not to act represents a political choice as well. It says that we do not think this is an important issue, and that we do not wish to take responsibility for our actions individually or as an organization. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, there is no value-free viewpoint. Instead, we, as individuals, and the System Dynamics Society as an organization, must choose the values that we embrace and support.

However, since the propositions contained in the proclamation attached, are not universally held, we think the Society should provide individuals an option to withdrawal their participation, if they so wish. By choosing a mechanism that affords participants the opportunity to opt out, the Society reinforces that it wishes to be a proactive socially-responsible organization. This means that it will provide the means for individuals to participate, adopting the procedure that is most likely yield the desired result: the hosting of carbon neutral conferences.

With the utmost deference and respect, we bring this proposal to your attention and evaluation.

Allyson Beall, Richard Dudley, Andy Ford, and Aldo ZagoneI