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BIPARTISAN STATE DELEGATION TO STUDY FRANCE'S PUSH FOR CARBON NEUTRALITY BY 2050

*Sen. Dodd, California Leaders to Exchange Lessons on
Climate Response, Nuclear Power, High Speed Rail, other Measures*

SACRAMENTO – This week, Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, will lead a bipartisan delegation to France to exchange best practices on climate-smart technologies and policies, including nuclear energy, low carbon farming, high speed rail, and more. The delegation comprises California legislators, environmental and labor leaders, business executives, and public policy experts.

France has ambitious plans to be carbon neutral by 2050. As one of the world's largest, most diverse economies, France's efforts represent a complex and daunting undertaking on par with California's own push to achieve carbon net zero.

“In France, California has a sister state in the battle against climate change,” said Sen. Dodd, the delegation chair. “I’m excited to see their progress firsthand, to better understand how California can move more quickly to reduce emissions while strengthening our workforce and maintaining affordability.”

The research tour is organized by the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy. No taxpayer funds are used.

The CFEE Delegation will meet with the International Energy Agency, French energy companies, and emerging clean energy providers. The group will also tour the multi-national ITER nuclear fusion project, the world's largest fusion facility, which is being supported by 35 countries, including the United States and San Diego-based company, General Atomics.

“Whether it is investing in next-generation fusion technology or smartly leveraging their existing inventory of zero carbon nuclear power plants, the French are delivering deep decarbonization while meeting growing energy demand and a growing economy,” said Jay Hansen, President and CEO of CFEE.

According to the California Energy Commission, California must *triple* its current electricity grid capacity by 2045 in order to reach its carbon neutral goals. At the same time, the state must wind down its natural gas-powered capacity, which currently provides nearly 40 percent of California’s energy needs.

“California is undergoing a historic energy transformation that requires a massive buildout of clean energy resources in a very short period of time,” added Hansen. “We must start moving more quickly with an ‘all of the above’ mentality if we truly plan to achieve an affordable carbon neutral future.”

The Delegation will also survey several climate-smart strategies in the transportation sector, including France’s world-class high speed rail system; Paris’s plans to make the city the most walkable and bikeable in the world; and the development of low-carbon fuels for ships, airplanes, and trains.

Low-carbon farming is another area where France is making strides. The Delegation will visit experimental farms where operators are testing techniques to dramatically reduce methane, CO2, and water consumption.

“France has long been a farming leader,” said Sen. Dodd. “I look forward to learning how France is implementing sustainable, low-carbon practices in the agriculture industry – while maintaining their position as a global ag leader – to see what California can learn.”

Hansen noted, “We cannot solve the climate crisis alone. More than ever, California needs to work with similarly situated, and similarly determined, nations like France to coordinate and amplify our decarbonization efforts.”

An independent, nonpartisan, 501(c)3, the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy has convened state leaders for more than four decades to examine critical issues related to California’s environment, with a view toward building consensus around long-term solutions. CFEE’s bipartisan forums and policy travel projects put a diverse cross-section of California leaders into direct contact with their counterparts around the world. This sharing of views and experiences leads to a broader understanding of complex issues and encourages the exchange of policy and technology ideas while also promoting what makes California special.

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Senator Bill Dodd represents the 3rd Senate District, which includes all or portions of Napa, Solano, Yolo, Sonoma, Contra Costa, and Sacramento counties. You can learn more about the district and Senator Dodd at www.sen.ca.gov/dodd.