

# MASSACHUSETTS LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FUND

An Act enabling taxpayer donations to the Least Developed Countries Fund established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

*Sponsored by Senator Michael J. Barrett, Representative Antonio F.D. Cabral, Representative Tram T. Nguyen and Representative Christine P. Barber*



## A GROUNDBREAKING BILL TO HELP THE MOST VULNERABLE COPE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a global humanitarian crisis that requires collective action. Rising global temperatures are fueling more frequent and intense extreme weather events across the world. From Bangladesh to Barbuda, **it is the poorest who bear the brunt of this devastation**, despite contributing the least to the problem.

This innovative bill creates **a voluntary checkoff on state tax returns to help the world's most vulnerable countries cope with climate change**. The funds collected through this bill will go directly to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), a U.N. fund dedicated to helping those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change but lack the resources to adapt and protect themselves. Because the program is entirely voluntary, there are no programmatic or net administrative costs to the state or mandates upon its residents.

**This bill is the first of its kind.** Not only will it help the world's most vulnerable cope with the impacts of climate change, but it will also support the Paris Agreement and encourage Massachusetts residents to make a global impact. By passing this bill, Massachusetts can provide a leading example of state-led action to support international climate finance that will be acknowledged across the world.

*By creating a voluntary checkoff on state tax returns that allows residents to contribute directly to those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, Massachusetts has an opportunity to set an example that will be acknowledged across the world.*

## HELP THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE

Funds collected through this bill will go to the U.N. Least Developed Countries Fund, which is devoted entirely to helping the more than 1 billion people in the poorest 47 countries in the world [1]. The World Bank reports that **climate change could result in up to 132 million additional people living in poverty by 2030**. Yet, those who suffer the most contribute least to the problem [2]. A recent report from Oxfam found that **the richest 1% of the world's population are responsible for more than twice as much carbon pollution as the 3.1 billion people who made up the poorest half of humanity** [3]. Financial support will be crucial to support these countries to mitigate the impacts of climate change and increase resilience of local communities.

## SUPPORT THE PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT

In 2017, former President Trump announced his intent to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement and slash international climate finance. In response, Massachusetts introduced this groundbreaking legislation that allows individuals to contribute directly to international climate finance. Now, under President Biden, the U.S. is officially back in the Paris Agreement and **this legislation will complement the federal government's obligation to provide international climate finance and serve as a powerful example** for other sub-national entities, both domestically and abroad, to follow.

## ENCOURAGE MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS TO MAKE A GLOBAL IMPACT

The majority of Massachusetts residents believe the state is not doing enough to fight climate change and citizens across the Commonwealth are asking the state to take action.

- **A vast majority of Massachusetts residents are concerned about climate change.** 79% of residents say it will be a "serious" problem and 53% say it will be "very serious" [4].
- Over half of Massachusetts residents name climate change as a "high priority" for state governments with **majorities supporting state-level policy initiatives** to deal with climate change [4].
- 56% of residents say **Massachusetts should act ahead of most other states** in responding to climate change [4].

## THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FUND

The LDCF was established by the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change to fund projects that mitigate the devastation of climate change and enhance a country's resiliency to climate change impacts. The fund has strong oversight and safeguards so that money flows directly to those most in need of assistance.

For example, in Haiti, dry seasons are getting longer, beach erosion is increasing, freshwater aquifers and estuaries are experiencing saltwater intrusion, and hurricanes are increasing in frequency and intensity. A project funded by the LDCF is allowing Haiti to shift from reactive crisis management to proactive risk management in an effort to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change. Funding is used to train policy makers, inform future policy for better coastal zone planning and improve construction and development standards so that coastal infrastructure and equipment are more resilient to future climatic changes.



Rice farmer Pierre-Louis Elusmé, 64, at his home in Brocozele village in Haiti.  
(Photo: Brett Eloff / Oxfam America)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [www.mass4climate.com](http://www.mass4climate.com) or contact Senator Mike Barrett's office at (617) 722-1572

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[1] The World Bank, 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/region/least-developed-countries:-un-classification>

[2] Jafino, B.A., Walsh, B., Rozenberg, J., and Hallegatte, S., 2020. *Revised Estimates of the Impact of Climate Change on Extreme Poverty by 2030*.

[3] Oxfam, 2020. *Confronting Carbon Inequality*.

[4] MassINC, 2020. The 80%. *The Waters Around Us: Public opinion research on Massachusetts residents' views on climate change*. Available at: <https://www.massincpolling.com/the-topline/2020/1/31/climate>