

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Luz Rivas, Chair

AB 39 (Chau) – As Amended March 25, 2021

SUBJECT: California-China Climate Institute

SUMMARY: Authorizes the Regents of the University of California (UC) to establish the California-China Climate Institute (CCCI).

EXISTING LAW, Article IX, Section 9 of the California Constitution, establishes the UC as a public trust to be administered by the UC Regents, “with full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to insure the security of its funds and compliance with the terms of the endowments of the university and such competitive bidding procedures as may be made applicable to the university by statute for the letting of construction contracts, sales of real property, and purchasing of materials, goods, and services.”

THIS BILL:

- 1) Authorizes the UC Regents to establish the CCCI, a UC-wide initiative to accelerate climate action through cooperative efforts and exchange between two of the world’s largest economic powers.
- 2) Requires CCCI to work closely with UC campuses, departments, and leaders to accomplish its work.
- 3) Requires CCCI to operate in partnership with the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at Tsinghua University and other entities and institutions in China and California.
- 4) Provides CCCI will, to the extent possible, receive guidance and support from expert policy, government, business, academic, and climate leaders and advisory committees, including the Assembly, the Senate, the Governor’s office, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Natural Resources Agency, and the UC.
- 5) Prescribes the following duties for CCCI:
 - a) Fostering collaboration among government, business, academic institutions, and civil society to inform and shape national and subnational climate policy and advance the goals of the Paris Agreement.
 - b) Advancing joint policy research on major climate issues, including:
 - i) Low-carbon transportation and zero-emission vehicles.
 - ii) Carbon pricing.
 - iii) Climate adaptation and resilience.

- iv) Sustainable land use and climate-smart agriculture.
- v) Carbon capture and storage.
- vi) Long-term climate goal setting and policy enforcement.
- c) Supporting high-level subnational climate dialogue between top government, business, and climate leaders from throughout the United States and China with respect to climate policy, investment, and finance.
- d) Providing training to Californian and Chinese researchers, scientists, technical experts, policymakers, and other leaders to advance critical climate and environmental policies, including, but not necessarily limited to, air quality, carbon pricing, carbon emissions, clean energy, and innovation.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

1) Author's statement:

In September 2019, former California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. helped launch the CCCI to promote climate action through joint research, training and dialogue between California and China. The Institute is jointly located at the UC Berkeley School of Law and the UC Berkeley College of Natural Resources. It has a partnership with the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at Tsinghua University in China and is tasked with informing policy makers, promoting communication and cooperation, and advancing the implementation of climate solutions at all levels of government and society. The Institute will advance joint policy research on major climate issues, including, but not limited to, low-carbon transportation and zero emission vehicles; carbon pricing; climate adaptation and resilience; sustainable land use and climate-smart agriculture; carbon capture and storage, and long-term climate goal setting and policy enforcement. By formalizing the institute in state law, AB 39 will make this important research institute permanent and ensure that California will continue leading the way in advancing climate research through collaboration between the institute and Chinese and American officials.

2) Messages from the Governor, there is one. Governor Brown writes in support of AB 39:

As chair of the (CCCI), housed at UC Berkeley, I write to express my strong support for AB 39. This bill recognizes – and codifies – the critical work of the Institute, which seeks to spur further climate action through joint research, training and dialogue between two of the world's top economic powers: California and China.

If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we are mutually vulnerable. The serious threats we face don't respect borders and they don't wait for nationalistic rivalries to abate.

To confront the climate threat and start reducing carbon emissions, it is imperative that we build strong partnerships and seek ever more durable solutions. The Institute, which is partnering with the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at Tsinghua University in Beijing, establishes a platform for doing just that.

The Institute is fortunate to have broad support from the Newsom Administration and the entire (UC) system. And by passing this bill, the California State Legislature can send a forceful message that the Golden State is united in the fundamental work of reversing global warming and making our environment truly sustainable.

Either we turn the tide together and put the world on the path to zero carbon emissions, or it won't be done. Please join me in supporting AB 39.

- 3) **Double referral.** This bill passed the Assembly Higher Education Committee by a vote of 8-4 on March 24, 2021.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr., 34th and 39th Governor of California
Elders Climate Action, NorCal and SoCal Chapters
Environmental Defense Fund, Incorporated
Natural Resources Defense Council

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Lawrence Lingbloom / NAT. RES. /