

RESOLUTION DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, in the past decade, the city of Stamford has experienced extreme weather, including both central and coastal flooding from events such as Hurricane Elsa (2021), Hurricane Ida (2021), and Hurricane Sandy (2012); and

WHEREAS, the city of Stamford is a coastal community and is vulnerable to rising sea levels; and

WHEREAS, in the past decade, Stamford experienced increasingly frequent extreme weather, including severe storms, drought, and intense heat, which has resulted in damage to critical infrastructure and property, increased urban heat island effect, loss of power and basic utilities, high riverine floodwaters, localized neighborhood flooding, reduced urban tree canopy, combined sewer overflows, and subsequent risks to public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world's most respected organization for study of research on climate change, notes in its 2014 Fifth Assessment Report, "Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive, and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems"; and

WHEREAS, the burning of fossil fuels has increased atmospheric CO₂ concentration to 414 parts per million (ppm) — well in excess of the 350 ppm level long thought to be the safe upper boundary and substantially higher than the global 800,000-year maximum of 280 ppm — causing increasingly numerous, intense, and destructive wildfires, floods, storms, and droughts, as well as sea-level rise and the spread of diseases; and

WHEREAS, climate-fueled induced droughts, famine, disease, and war have already killed millions of people around the world, displaced millions more, and initiated the sixth major extinction of animal species; and

WHEREAS, in April 2016, world leaders from 175 countries, including the United States, recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement, pledging to work to keep warming "well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and to "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C"; and

WHEREAS, in October 2018, an IPCC special report projected that limiting warming to the 1.5°C target this century will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy over the next 12 years; and

WHEREAS, in March 2020, climate scientists calculated that global warming has already exceeded by over 2°C pre-industrial average global temperatures, accelerating self-reinforcing changes ("feedback loops"), including the exponential increase in the release of sequestered methane, a greenhouse gas with some twenty-five times the global-warming potential of carbon dioxide; and

WHEREAS, restoring a safe climate urgently requires a comprehensive emergency mobilization to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, to remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, to adopt measures to protect all species from the consequences of abrupt climate change;

WHEREAS, the United States has contributed disproportionately to the climate and ecological crisis and has repeatedly obstructed efforts by other countries to transition toward a sustainable economy, and thus bears a particular responsibility to address this crisis without delay; and

WHEREAS, ~~Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, as well as~~ low-income communities, especially minority communities in particular, in the United States and around the world have suffered the gravest consequences of the extractive economy since its inception and also suffer first and most acutely from climate disruption and environmental hazards, including air, water, and land pollution; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that the City of Stamford rise to the challenge of the greatest crisis in history by joining local and global efforts to transition to an economy not based on fossil fuels.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STAMFORD BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES declares a climate emergency that threatens the existence of our civilization and the natural world; and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution provides the foundation upon which the City of Stamford shall develop future priorities, legislation, policies, plans, budgets, and actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Stamford Board of Representatives will work with the Mayor to establish an emergency mobilization effort that, with ongoing City funding and appropriate financial and regulatory assistance from state and federal authorities, will aim to end City-generated greenhouse gas emissions by or before December 31, 2030, and to adopt techniques to safely reduce emitted carbon; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Representatives urges the Mayor to direct all City department heads, committees, and commissions to establish plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by both the City and the wider community, placing the highest priority on providing the benefits of a clean-energy economy to all community members on an equitable basis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Stamford recognizes environmental injustice as a racial justice issue which the City commits to address and understands that an equitable transition to a fossil-fuel-free economy requires full community participation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City of Stamford supports statewide implementation of the Transportation and Climate Initiative, a cap-and-invest program designed to cap and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and provide for investment in clean, sustainable transportation solutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Stamford will advocate for coordinated climate action at the ~~municipal~~, regional, state, and federal levels to restore a safe and sustainable climate for all living beings on Earth.