

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-375

RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, there is a climate emergency which demands mobilization on a massive scale to halt, reverse, and address the causes and consequences of global warming;

WHEREAS, according to the World Meteorological Association, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 were the 4 hottest years on record, and 20 of the warmest years on record to have occurred within the past 22 years;

WHEREAS, global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, the primary heat-trapping or “greenhouse” gas, (i) have increased by 40 percent since preindustrial times, from 280 parts per million to 415 parts per million, primarily due to human activities, including burning fossil fuels and deforestation, (ii) are rising at a rate of 2 to 3 parts per million annually, and (iii) must be reduced to not more than 350 parts per million, and likely lower, if, according to former National Aeronautics and Space Administration climatologist Dr. James Hansen, “humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilizations developed and to which life on Earth is adapted”;

WHEREAS, current climate science and real-world observations of climate change impacts, including ocean warming and acidification, floods, droughts, wildfires, and extreme weather, demonstrate that a global rise in temperatures of 1 degree Celsius above preindustrial levels is already having dangerous impacts on human populations and the environment;

WHEREAS, the 2018 National Climate Assessment found the climate change due to global warming has caused substantial interference with and growing losses to infrastructure, property, industry, recreation, natural resources, agriculture systems, human health and safety, and quality of life in the United States, and is expected to cause further losses to these vital resources;

WHEREAS, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has determined that climate change is already increasing the frequency of extreme weather events and other climate-related disasters, including droughts, wildfires, and storms;

WHEREAS, the National Climate and Health Assessment of the United States Global Change Research Program identified climate change as a significant threat to the health of the people of the United States, in that it would lead to increased (i) temperature-related deaths and illness, (ii) air quality impacts, (iii) extreme weather events, (iv) vector-borne diseases, (v) waterborne illness, (vi) food safety, nutrition, and distribution complications, and (vii) mental health and well-being concerns;

WHEREAS, individuals and families on the front lines of climate change across Alameda County, the United States, and the world who live with income inequality and poverty, institutional racism, inequity on the basis of gender and sexual orientation, poor infrastructure, and lack of access to health care, housing, clean water, and food security, particularly communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income communities, and who experience greater risk of harm from climate change because of their close proximity to environmental hazards and stressors, are often the first to suffer the impacts of climate change and have the fewest resources to avoid those impacts or to relocate, and that this will exacerbate their pre-existing challenges;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Defense, and the intelligence community have identified climate change as a threat to national security;

WHEREAS, in 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected that the Earth could warm to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels as early as 2030;

WHEREAS, in 2019, the United National Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services found that human-induced climate change is pushing the planet toward the sixth mass species extinction, which threatens the food security, water supply, and well-being of billions of people;

WHEREAS, according to climate scientists, limiting warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, and likely lower, is most likely necessary to avoid irreversible and catastrophic climate change;

WHEREAS, the IPCC has determined that limiting global warming through emissions reductions and carbon sequestration will require rapid and immediate acceleration and proliferation of “far reaching, multi-level, and cross-sectoral climate mitigation,” and “transitions in energy, land, urban and rural infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems”;

WHEREAS, massive, comprehensive, and urgent local, state, federal, and international governmental action is required immediately to achieve the transitions of those systems in response to the sever existing and projected economic, social, public health, and national security threats posed by the climate crisis;

WHEREAS, the County of Alameda has a proud history of proactively making collaborative and constructive efforts to address significant issues, including reducing its use of fossil fuels and other actions to address climate change;

WHEREAS, collaborative efforts between the County and other local, state, and federal government agencies to address global warming would not only preserve jobs, but could create millions of jobs by ensuring that workers are guaranteed a strong, viable economic future in a zero-emissions economy;

WHEREAS, frontline communities, Tribal governments and communities, people of color, and labor unions must be equitably and actively engaged in the climate mobilization and prioritized through local climate mitigation measures and adaptation planning, policy, and program development and delivery so that all workers in Alameda County, the State of California, and the United States are guaranteed a strong, viable economic future;

WHEREAS, all levels of government within the United States have an obligation to drive accelerated climate change and mobilize at emergency speed to restore a safe climate and environment not just for their own communities, but for all communities across the world, particularly those on the front lines of the climate crisis who have contributed the least to the crisis, and to account for global and community impacts of any actions they take in response to the climate crisis;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda, State of California, that:

1. Global climate change caused by human activities has resulted in a climate emergency that urgently and severely impacts the economic and social well-being, health and safety, and security of the County of Alameda, the State of California, and the United States;
2. Global climate change demands immediate mobilization of resources and labor at a massive scale at every level – local, state, national, international, social, industrial, and economic – to halt, reverse, mitigate, and prepare for the consequences of the climate emergency and to restore the climate for future generations;
3. In the face of global climate change, Alameda County reaffirms its commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation through greenhouse gas emissions reduction and resilience efforts. The County will continue to formulate and implement subsequent phases of mitigation and resiliency plans throughout our agencies. The County will put into effect priority programs and projects to support resilience efforts within our most vulnerable communities who will be the first affected;

4. The County will set new carbon reduction targets, aggressively pursue emission reduction strategies in its own operations and invest in resilient service delivery;
5. The County will leverage regional collaboration to meet the unprecedented challenges and consider how the County can support a just transition to a carbon-free economy, and
6. The County further reaffirms its support for the Paris Climate Agreement and the role of local governments in meeting global goals for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

THE FOREGOING was PASSED and ADOPTED by a majority of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda, State of California at the meeting of the said Board held on this 1st day of October 2019 by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors Chan, Miley & President Valle - 3

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

EXCUSED: Supervisors Carson & Haggerty - 2



PRESIDENT, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST:

By: R Bauby, Deputy
CLERK OF THE BOARD

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

By: [Signature]
ASSISTANT COUNTY COUNSEL