

Staff Report

To: RCPA Board of Directors
From: Aleka Seville, Director of Climate Programs
Item: 4.1.1 – RCPA Climate Emergency Resolution (ACTION)*
Date: September 9, 2019

Issue:

Shall the Board adopt a Resolution declaring a climate emergency?

Background:

Over 925 local governments representing over 206 million people in 18 countries have declared a climate emergency. These cities, counties and countries have developed these resolutions to solidify their commitment to mobilizing an emergency response that is commensurate with the scale of the climate crisis.

Sonoma County remains the only county in the US to create a Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) to coordinate and support climate action countywide. RCPA is well positioned to take a leadership role in this movement by declaring a climate emergency that commits us to developing a 2030 Climate Emergency Mobilization Strategy and acknowledges the following:

- The current scale and rate of expansion of local government action has not resulted in the necessary greenhouse gas emission reductions needed to avert catastrophic, irreversible climate impacts
- Many of the major climate change drivers—energy generation, fuel standards, consumption patterns, product design and specification and large scale infrastructure investments—are dispersed across both the private and public sector and are controlled at scales larger than local and regional governments
- We cannot only focus on reducing emissions but must also dramatically increase and enable meaningful carbon sequestration while preparing communities now for significant climate impacts
- We must reimagine the role of local government and work within and outside of our jurisdictional boundaries and across sectors to drive the systems change need to address major climate change drivers
- That our communities, members and partners are our greatest assets and allies and therefore this mobilization effort must be both robust and inclusive

Policy Impacts:

If adopted, this resolution would provide direction for RCPA staff to work with members and partners and the larger Sonoma County community to develop a 2030 Climate Emergency Mobilization Strategy and the necessary internal structures and ongoing funding to support this effort.

Fiscal Impacts:

There are no direct fiscal impacts to approving the resolution. However, addressing and implementing the content of the resolution will require financial and staff resources.

Staff Recommendation:

That the Board adopt Resolution No. 2019-002 to direct RCPA to develop a 2030 Climate Emergency Mobilization Strategy. That the Board promote the attached model resolution as a policy option for local jurisdictions to consider.

**RESOLUTION OF THE SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL CLIMATE PROTECTION
AUTHORITY ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND
IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION TO RESTORE A SAFE CLIMATE**

WHEREAS, human activities have warmed the Earth to a point that threatens climate stability, and climate change has already set in motion catastrophic changes to the Earth's systems, including fresh water scarcity and droughts, floods, extreme weather events and increased heat, wildfires, accelerating ice mass loss that will result in sea-level rise, and species extinction; and

WHEREAS, the current pace and scale of national climate action is not sufficient to avert substantial damage to the economy, environment, and human health over the coming decades; and

WHEREAS, the October 8, 2018, special report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected that curtailing warming to 1.5°C to reduce the risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, economic growth, and plant and animal life will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy over the next 12 years;

WHEREAS, on November 23, 2018 the Federal Government issued the *Fourth National Climate Assessment*¹ detailing the massive threat that climate change poses to the American economy and underscoring the need for immediate climate emergency action at all levels of government; and

WHEREAS, critical tipping points must be avoided, as they will have cascading feedback effects that are predicted to cause an increasingly uncontrollable climate emergency that includes a devastating burden to the global economy, and with current greenhouse gas (GHG) emission levels these tipping points could be passed as soon as 2050; and

WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate requires an emergency mobilization to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, to rapidly and safely draw down or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and to implement measures to protect all people and species; and

WHEREAS, a just transition away from fossil fuels requires the development of a framework for a fair shift to an economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable, and just for all its members; and

WHEREAS, marginalized communities worldwide—including people of color, immigrants, indigenous communities, low-income people, those with disabilities, and the unhoused—are already disproportionately affected by climate change and must benefit from a just transition to a sustainable and equitable economy; and

WHEREAS, on September 10, 2018, the State of California's Governor Brown issued an executive order establishing a 2045 statewide target to achieve carbon neutrality, and on the same day, Senate Bill 100 was passed, which sets a 100% clean electricity goal for the State by 2045; and

WHEREAS, *California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment*² warned that extreme weather and climate-related events in the United States are worsening, predicting increased drought cycles and heat waves in the western U.S. with a resulting three-fold increase in intensity and magnitude of wildfires, declined water supply and snow pack, increased flooding, impacted agriculture, as well as substantial damages to the U.S. economy and human health, unless GHG emissions are curbed; and

¹ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

² <http://www.climateassessment.ca.gov/>

WHEREAS, the California Legislature has set clear climate objectives for the next decade, including a 40% reduction in 1990 level GHG emissions by 2030; 50% renewable energy; 50% reduction in petroleum use in vehicles; and a doubling of energy efficiency savings in existing buildings³; and

WHEREAS, Sonoma County has already begun to experience extreme climate-related events, including six years of drought, the October 2017 Northern California wildfires, which caused more than \$9.4 billion in damage and killed forty-four people, and the February 2019 Winter Storms and Flooding that caused over \$150 million in damages and resulted in the declaration of a local health emergency due to the scale of household hazardous waste scattered along waterways, roadsides, and on public and private properties after flooding; and

WHEREAS, Sonoma County public agencies have taken a number of important actions to reduce GHG emissions and enhance quality of life in our community, including long-term commitments to preserving over 100,000 acres of both agricultural and open space lands; setting and meeting a goal to deliver carbon free water; offering cost effective programs to reduce energy use and conserve water; and establishing Sonoma Clean Power, a regional community choice energy provider offering the first 100% local renewable power option in California; and

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) was created to assist Sonoma County agencies in meeting their GHG emission reduction goals as set forth in resolutions and adopted plans; and

WHEREAS, the RCPA has the statutory authority to perform planning and coordination activities, including but not limited to designing programs and policies to reduce energy and water consumption and increase access to clean transportation options; identifying carbon sequestration opportunities; and measuring, tracking and communicating ongoing GHG reductions; and

WHEREAS, the current scale and rate of expansion of local government action has not resulted in the necessary reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions to enable us to limit global temperature increase to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and no more than 1.5°C as outlined in the 2016 Paris Climate Accord and recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); and

WHEREAS, many of the major climate change drivers—energy generation, fuel standards, consumption patterns, product design and specification, and large scale infrastructure investments—are dispersed across both the private and public sector and are controlled at scales larger than local and regional governments; and

WHEREAS, in order to avoid irreversible, catastrophic climate change impacts, we cannot only focus on reducing emissions but must also dramatically increase and enable meaningful carbon sequestration while preparing communities now for significant climate impacts;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) declares that a climate emergency threatens humanity and the natural and built environments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RCPA joins a nationwide call for a just transition away from fossil fuels and an urgent collaborative climate mobilization effort focused on enacting policies that

³ <https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/pillars/pillars.htm>

dramatically reduce heat-trapping emissions and rapidly catalyzing a mobilization at all levels of government to restore a safe climate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an urgent global climate mobilization effort to reverse global warming is needed to achieve zero net emissions as quickly as possible and that full community participation, inclusion, and support is integral to our efforts to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere and accelerate adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying climate impacts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA acknowledges that there is still time to act and that successful climate action and a just transition at scale requires that our members and partners work both within and outside of our regional boundaries and across sectors to accelerate the necessary systems change required to address the climate emergency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA, as a special district created to coordinate regional climate action, commits to developing a countywide 2030 Climate Emergency Mobilization Strategy that focuses on identifying key local actions—including a ten-year Emergency Policy Package prioritizing a short list of the most impactful local policies that will drive systems change and identifying the key areas for state level advocacy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA leads a local government coalition to mobilize regional climate action in Sonoma County and calls on our member and partner agencies, local businesses, community organizations, and residents to actively participate in this climate emergency mobilization effort; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA Board directs the RCPA staff to work with the County Administrator and City Managers to identify a Climate Emergency Liaison for each jurisdiction and appropriate internal structure to support the development and implementation of a countywide 2030 Climate Emergency Mobilization Strategy and to identify a reporting timeline and process for tracking progress; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA Board of Directors supports the RCPA in exploring new and more diverse funding and financing mechanisms to sustain local Climate Emergency Mobilization efforts and commits to working with city and county elected officials and staff to identify and dedicate additional human and financial resources within each of our member jurisdictions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA commits to working with the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled through robust Transportation Demand Management strategies as aligned with California's 2030, 2045 and 2050 greenhouse gas reduction and climate goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA commits to working with the Bay Area Regional Energy Network and the County of Sonoma Energy and Sustainability Division on energy efficiency and water conservation strategies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA commits to working with the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District on carbon sequestration in working and natural lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA commits to working with Sonoma Clean Power on electrification, expanding access to electric vehicles and infrastructure, and grid reliability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA commits to working with the Bay Area Air Quality management District and Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District on improving air quality and reducing ozone precursors, particulate matter, toxic air contaminants, and greenhouse gas emissions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA commits to working with our member and partner agencies to revise existing county and city policies, priorities, processes, and resources to implement Climate Emergency Mobilization efforts countywide.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was moved by Director _____, seconded by Director _____, and approved by the following vote:

Director Bagby	_____	Director Miller	_____
Director Callinan	_____	Director Naujokas	_____
Director Gorin	_____	Director Rabbitt	_____
Director Gurney	_____	Director Rogers	_____
Director Harvey	_____	Director Salmon	_____
Director Landman	_____	Director Zane	_____

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

SO ORDERED

I, the undersigned, certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Transportation Authority held on September 9, 2019.

Suzanne Smith, Executive Director
Clerk, Sonoma County Transportation Authority

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF/CITY OF ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION TO RESTORE A SAFE CLIMATE:

WHEREAS, human activities have warmed the Earth to a point that threatens climate stability, and climate change has already set in motion catastrophic changes to the Earth's systems, including fresh water scarcity and droughts, floods, extreme weather events and increased heat, wildfires, accelerating ice mass loss that will result in sea-level rise, and species extinction; and

WHEREAS, the current pace and scale of national climate action is not sufficient to avert substantial damage to the economy, environment, and human health over the coming decades; and

WHEREAS, the October 8, 2018 special report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected that curtailing warming to 1.5°C to reduce the risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, economic growth and plant and animal life this century, will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy over the next 12 years; and

WHEREAS, on November 23, 2018 the Federal Government issued the *Fourth National Climate Assessment*¹ detailing the massive threat that climate change poses to the American economy and underscoring the need for immediate climate emergency action at all levels of government; and

WHEREAS, critical tipping points must be avoided, as they will have cascading feedback effects that are predicted to cause an increasingly uncontrollable climate emergency that includes a devastating burden to the global economy, and with current greenhouse gas (GHG) emission levels these tipping points could be passed as soon as 2050; and

WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate requires an emergency mobilization to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, to rapidly and safely draw down or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and to implement measures to protect all people and species; and

WHEREAS, a just transition away from fossil fuels requires the development of a framework for a fair shift to an economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable, and just for all its members; and

WHEREAS, marginalized communities worldwide—including people of color, immigrants, indigenous communities, low-income people, those with disabilities, and the unhoused—are already disproportionately affected by climate change and must benefit from a just transition to a sustainable and equitable economy; and

¹ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

WHEREAS, on September 10, 2018, the State of California’s Governor Brown issued an executive order establishing a 2045 statewide target to achieve carbon neutrality, and on the same day, Senate Bill 100 was passed, which sets a 100% clean electricity goal for the State by 2045; and

WHEREAS, *California’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment*² warned that extreme weather and climate-related events in the United States are worsening, predicting increased drought cycles and heat waves in the western U.S. with a resulting three-fold increase in intensity and magnitude of wildfires, declined water supply and snow pack, increased flooding, impacted agriculture, as well as substantial damages to the U.S. economy and human health, unless GHG emissions are curbed; and

WHEREAS, the California Legislature has set clear climate objectives for the next decade, including a 40% reduction in 1990 level GHG emissions by 2030; 50% renewable energy; 50% reduction in petroleum use in vehicles and a doubling of energy efficiency savings in existing buildings³; and

WHEREAS, Sonoma County has already begun to experience extreme climate-related events, including six years of drought, the October 2017 Northern California wildfires, which caused more than \$9.4 billion in damage and killed forty-four people, and the February 2019 Winter Storms and Flooding that caused over \$150 million in damages and resulted in the declaration of a local health emergency due to the scale of household hazardous waste scattered along waterways, roadsides and on public and private properties after flooding; and

WHEREAS, Sonoma County public agencies have taken a number of important actions to reduce GHG emissions and enhance quality of life in our community, including long-term commitments to preserving over 100,000 acres of both agricultural and open space lands; setting and meeting a goal to deliver carbon free water; offering cost effective programs to reduce energy use and conserve water; and establishing Sonoma Clean Power, a regional community choice energy provider offering the first 100% local renewable power option in California; and

WHEREAS, the current scale and rate of expansion of local government action has not resulted in the necessary reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions to enable us to limit global temperature increase to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and no more than 1.5°C as outlined in the 2016 Paris Climate Accord and recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); and

WHEREAS, many of the major climate change drivers - energy generation, fuel standards, consumption patterns, product design and specification and large scale infrastructure

² <http://www.climateassessment.ca.gov/>

³ <https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/pillars/pillars.htm>

investments – are dispersed across both the private and public sector and are controlled at scales larger than local and regional governments; and

WHEREAS, in order to avoid irreversible, catastrophic climate change impacts, we cannot only focus on reducing emissions but must also dramatically increase and enable meaningful carbon sequestration while preparing communities now for significant climate impacts;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the **COUNTY/CITY OF XXXX** declares that a climate emergency threatens humanity and the natural and built environments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the **CITY/COUNTY OF XXXX** joins a nationwide call for a just transition away from fossil fuels and an urgent collaborative climate mobilization effort focused on enacting policies that dramatically reduce heat-trapping emissions, and rapidly catalyzing a mobilization at all levels of government to restore a safe climate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an urgent global climate mobilization effort to reverse global warming is needed to achieve zero net emissions as quickly as possible and that full community participation, inclusion and support is integral to our efforts to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere and accelerate adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying climate impacts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the **CITY/COUNTY OF XXXX** acknowledges that successful climate action and a just transition at scale requires that we work both within and outside of our regional boundaries and across sectors to accelerate the necessary systems change required to address the climate emergency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the **CITY/COUNTY OF XXXX**, commits to contributing to the development of a countywide 2030 Climate Emergency Mobilization Strategy that focuses on identifying key local actions – including a ten-year Emergency Policy Package prioritizing a short list of the most impactful local policies that will drive systems change and identify the key areas for state level advocacy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the **CITY/COUNTY OF XXXX** commits to identifying a Climate Emergency Mobilization Liaison to drive this effort in our jurisdiction and to provide financial resources to support the participation of this **city/county staff member** or a designated RCPA staff member in the RCPA coalition of local governments mobilizing regional climate action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the **Council/Board of Supervisors of CITY/COUNTY OF XXXX** establishes the development and implementation of the 2030 Climate Emergency Mobilization Strategy as **Council/Board** priority, in alignment with statewide climate goals, and directs staff to work with the RCPA and coalition members to integrate climate change considerations into all policies.