

**EATON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**OCTOBER 21, 2020**

**RESOLUTION TO DECLARE A CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

**Introduced by Commissioner Joe Brehler**

Commissioner Brehler moved the approval of the following resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Haskell.

**WHEREAS**, on October 8, 2018, the United Nations released a special report that projected that limited warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius this century will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy over the next 12 years;<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Fourth National Climate Assessment detailed the massive threat that climate change poses to the American economy and underscored the need for *emergency climate action at all levels of government*;<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the 2019 Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change on the Great Lakes<sup>3</sup> highlights the significant impacts in our unique backyard, including, in the tri-county area and all of Michigan, flooding of streets, home and agricultural areas, power outages, record low and high temperatures, delayed planting, and weather-related school and business closures; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change has a disproportional effect on impacted communities, such as indigenous tribes, rural communities, coastal communities, workers, low-income households and people of color, who typically have fewer resources for adapting to climate change and are therefore the most vulnerable to displacement, adverse health effects, job loss, property damage and other effects of climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change threatens one million animal and plant species with extinction according to a sweeping United Nations report (May 6, 2019); and has a disproportionate effect on fish and wildlife populations, which require specific habitat conditions and are therefore particularly vulnerable to warmer temperatures, modified precipitation patterns, diminished snowpack, ocean acidification and other effects of climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, the temperature in the Arctic Circle hit 101° F on June 20, 2020, and the death and destruction already wrought by global warming of approximately 1.1° C above the late 19<sup>th</sup> century levels demonstrates that Earth is already too hot for safety and justice; and

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2018/10/special-climate-report-1-5oc-is-possible-but-requires-unprecedented-and-urgent-action>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.globalchange.gov/nca4>

<sup>3</sup><http://elpc.org/glclimatechange/>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2020/06/22/the-arctic-circle-hit-101f-Saturday-its->

hottest-temperature-ever/#449a83974eb6

**WHEREAS**, in the absence of effective federal engagement, it is the responsibility of the individual states, counties and cities, to take immediate leadership actions to address climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, over 1,000 local governments in 18 countries have already signed emergency declarations, including, in Michigan, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo and Washtenaw County; and

**WHEREAS**, a formal Declaration of a Climate Emergency by Eaton County is the critical first step in laying the foundation to address this climate crisis, because a formal declaration will provide the catalyst to mobilize residents, businesses, institutions, and faith and community organizations to work together to prioritize the immediate reduction of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and support the County to plan for community resilience and adaptation under environmental threat;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Eaton County declare a climate emergency; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the intent of this declaration is to build awareness and urgency to develop sustainable practices at the County through the continued work of the Chairman's Sustainability Steering Committee, and to build resiliency into the County's relationship to its citizens by identifying and implementing environmental programming in its existing commitments; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Eaton County will seek partnerships with other regional governments, businesses, community groups, educational and other anchor institutions to best utilize regional expertise and resources to meet shared goals; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Eaton County will, expeditiously and with serious determination, seek any available state, federal, and private funding for this effort and form alliances with other Michigan local units of government that have declared a climate emergency or have a written climate action plan to lobby for such funding; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Eaton County will underscore the need for full community participation, inclusion, and support for the climate mobilization effort.

Seconded by Commissioner Haskell. Roll call vote. Ayes: Rob Piercefield, Terrance Augustine, Jeanne Pearl-Wright, Jane M. Whitacre, Brandon Haskell, Joseph Brehler, Glenn Freeman, Matthew S. Bowen. Nays: Blake Mulder, Brian Droscha, Wayne Ridge, Brian Lautzenheiser, Jim Mott and Barbara Rogers. Carried.

Background Information:

An Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change on the Great Lakes by the Environmental Law & Policy Center <http://elpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Great-Lakes-Climate-Change-Report.pdf>

Climate Change in the Great Lakes Region  
<http://glisa.umich.edu/media/files/GLISA%20%20Pager%202019.pdf>

Synthesis of the Third National Climate Assessment for the Great Lakes Region  
[http://glisa.umich.edu/media/files/Great\\_Lakes\\_NCA\\_Synthesis.pdf](http://glisa.umich.edu/media/files/Great_Lakes_NCA_Synthesis.pdf)

Climate Change Will Strain Michigan Infrastructure by MLive  
<https://www.mlive.com/news/2019/04/climate-change-will-strain-michigan-infrastructure-say-experts.html>

What Climate Change Means for Michigan by EPA  
<https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/climate-change-mi.pdf>