



City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

In the City Council, April 1, 2021

Upon the Recommendation of: Councilor Karen Foster
 Councilor Rachel Maiore
 Councilor Alex Jarrett

R-21.231

A RESOLUTION DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, in a world facing the extreme challenges of rapid climate change, Northampton residents understand the importance of protecting the Earth and its inhabitants; can envision a better, sustainable future; and can create and execute bold plans for a prosperous economy and a thriving community; and

WHEREAS, progress toward this future is underway in Massachusetts, which is among national leaders on climate initiatives with over 100,000 jobs in the state's clean energy sector¹ and named a top energy efficient state for the past decade by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy; and

WHEREAS, Northampton has an engaged City government and has undertaken a number of important steps on climate and the environment, (such as the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan and the Climate Resilience and Regeneration Plan), such that the City is well placed to implement the critical transition away from fossil fuels and to advance a robust, carbon-free, equitable economy and the improved health and quality of life that will result; and

WHEREAS, on April 22, 2016, world leaders from 175 countries recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing 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 Mayor David J. Narkewicz committed to the Paris Accord on behalf of Northampton; and

¹O'Brien, Kelly J. "Clean energy jobs top 100,000 for first time in Mass., according to new report," *Boston Business Journal*. Dec. 15, 2016. <https://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2016/12/15/clean-energy-jobs-top-100-000-for-first-time-in.html>

WHEREAS, marginalized populations in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and worldwide, including people of color, immigrants, indigenous communities, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, and the unhoused are already disproportionately affected by climate change, and will continue to bear an excessive burden as temperatures increase, oceans rise, and natural disasters worsen; and

WHEREAS, nearly 400 cities, districts and counties across the world collectively representing over 34 million people have recently declared or officially acknowledged the existence of a global Climate Emergency, including over 20 Massachusetts cities and towns such as Boston, Lexington, Acton, and 11 towns on Cape Cod; and

WHEREAS, declaring the climate crisis as an emergency is a crucial first step for aligning residents around the urgency of the global climate breakdown; and

WHEREAS, declaring that the climate crisis is an emergency demonstrates that our government agencies acknowledge that addressing climate change will require an emergency response at emergency speed; and

WHEREAS, the crisis caused by climate change also presents a major opportunity to invest in healthy energy, transportation, land-use, and agriculture systems that will deliver both immediate and sustained benefits to all and reduce future risks from climate change;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of Northampton affirms that human activity caused the climate crisis and that fossil fuels are the primary cause;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of Northampton hereby declares that a Climate Emergency threatens our city, state, and nation, as well as humanity broadly, and that a mobilization to meet this challenge is both a moral imperative and an unprecedented opportunity to stabilize the climate, remedy environmental harms, create clean-energy jobs, and improve human lives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the Northampton City Council call on City government and staff and all Northampton civic groups, businesses, and residents to commit to a climate mobilization effort to bring net City-wide carbon emissions to zero no later than the year 2050, though we advocate for increased state and federal assistance so that we can aim for carbon neutrality by 2030;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Northampton's climate mobilization should also: (1) accelerate adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying local and global climate impacts; (2) continue to protect trees, forests, and other open spaces because of their ability to draw carbon out of the atmosphere and store it; (3) protect the habitats and corridors of wildlife that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; and (4) ensure that the costs of such mobilization efforts do not unfairly burden those who are economically or socially disadvantaged and that the benefits of a realized, sustainable future accrue to all.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall send a copy of this Resolution to Representative Lindsay Sabadosa and Senator Jo Comerford, as well as Governor Charles Baker, DOER Commissioner Patrick Woodcock, and the Co-Chairs and Vice Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy, Senators Mike Barrett and Mark Pacheco and Representatives Jeffrey Roy and Paul Mark.