

A RESOLUTION SETTING 2030 CARBON NEUTRAL GOAL AND DIRECTING COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

August 5, 2020

*Sponsored by: Commissioners Morgan and Shink*

**WHEREAS**, In September of 2019, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to endorse a climate emergency declaration, setting a 2035 goal of becoming carbon neutral, beginning a regional mobilization effort to limit greenhouse gas emissions and calling on the state and the federal government to declare a climate emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, Washtenaw County has recently experienced unprecedented crises, causing us to take a harder look at the risks to our community and take even more seriously our critical role as county government in ensuring the immediate and long-term health and safety of our residents; and

**WHEREAS**, scientific experts warned of the risk of a global pandemic and public health emergencies were determined to be ninth hazard risk facing residents of Washtenaw County as determined by Washtenaw County Emergency Services Division and the Homeland Security Task Force's Hazard Analysis; and

**WHEREAS**, we must hear this lesson as a call to action to do better to take proactive steps to mitigate future risks; and

**WHEREAS**, convective weather, severe winter temperatures, extreme temperatures, flood hazards and petroleum and natural gas pipeline accidents, all hazards exacerbated by climate change, make up six of the top ten hazards facing residents in the very same Hazard Analysis; and

**WHEREAS**, deaths and economic and natural resource destruction already caused by global warming of approximately 1°C demonstrate that the Earth is already too hot for safety and justice as attested by increased and intensifying extended and excessive rainfall in Michigan, floods, rising seas, wildfires, diseases, droughts and extreme weather; and

**WHEREAS**, effects of climate change in Washtenaw County include but are not limited to too much rainfall for farmers to plant crops, late hard frosts that impact crops, health threatening heat stress suffered by residents, combined sewer overflows due to rainfall, increased vector-borne diseases such as EEE and Lyme disease and severe winter weather; and

**WHEREAS**, restoring a safe and stable climate requires an emergency mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors at

wartime speed, to rapidly and safely drawdown or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and to implement measures to protect all people and species from the consequences of abrupt climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, the term “Just Transition” is a framework for a fair shift to an economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable and just for all its members; and

**WHEREAS**, “Just transition” strategies were first forged by a ‘blue-green’ alliance of labor unions and environmental justice groups who saw the need to phase out the industries that were harming workers, community health and the planet, while also providing just pathways for workers into new livelihoods; and

**WHEREAS**, “Just transition” initiatives shift the economy from dirty energy to energy democracy, from carbon-intensive transportation to public and carbon-neutral transit, from incinerators and landfills to zero waste, from industrial food systems to food sovereignty, from sprawl and unbridled growth to smart urban development without displacement and support for working farms, and habitat and ecosystem restoration; and

**WHEREAS**, justice requires that the people of frontline communities of people of color, which have historically borne the brunt of the extractive fossil-fuel economy, participate actively in the planning and implementation of this mobilization effort at all levels of government and that they benefit first from the transition to a renewable locally-produced energy economy; and

**WHEREAS**, fairness and equity demand a guarantee of high-paying, good-quality jobs with comprehensive benefits for all and many other tenets of a “Green New Deal” effort as the mobilization to restore a safe climate is launched; and

**WHEREAS**, Washtenaw County can act as a global leader by both converting to an ecologically, socially and economically regenerative economy at emergency speed, and by catalyzing a unified regional just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort this year; and

**WHEREAS**, following our declaration, our partners at the City of Ann Arbor declared a climate emergency and set a goal to become carbon neutral by 2030, and the City of Ypsilanti set its own carbon neutrality goal for 2035; and

**WHEREAS**, the County has made progress working toward our goal, through strong engagement of our Environmental Council in the areas of data collection, planning and collaboration with our community partners; and

**WHEREAS**, a proposal has been generated to create an Office of Energy and Sustainability within Washtenaw County government; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washtenaw County Leadership Development Group recommended the creation of the Office of Energy and Sustainability; and

**WHEREAS**, staff within the Office of Infrastructure Management have successfully replaced approximately 25% of interior lighting to LED, but more resources need to be invested to replace the remaining 75% of lighting to more efficient LEDs; and

**WHEREAS**, staff within the Office of Infrastructure Management have identified three County buildings that are primed for solar energy installation: 4135 Washtenaw Avenue, 2140 E. Ellsworth, and 1000 N. Maple, but more resources need to be invested to support the installation of solar on these locations; and

**WHEREAS**, staff within the Office of Infrastructure Management have identified that the lighting replacement and the solar installations combined could shrink the County's carbon footprint by 5 million pounds and reduce energy costs by \$412,000 annually and essentially pay for themselves within 7.4 years once the projects are implemented.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners recommits to a goal of achieving a carbon-neutral county government and revises the target date for this goal to 2030, in order to acknowledge the seriousness and urgency of this issue, and to act in alignment with our local community partners.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners directs the County Administrator to present a proposal at the September 2, 2020, meeting to complete a Climate Action Plan, and that this plan would provide for carbon neutrality for Washtenaw County Operations by 2030, and that the plan would be completed and presented to the Board of Commissioners prior to the end of 2020.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board of Commissioners directs the County Administrator to develop a plan to ensure adequate staff resources to ensure completion of the Climate Action Plan, either through the creation of the Office of Energy and Sustainability within Washtenaw County government or through other effective means, and that the plan to achieve this would be completed and presented to the Board of Commissioners prior to the end of 2020.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the approval of the Office of Infrastructure Management's Interior LED Lighting Capital Improvement Project, as is prepared for consideration by the Ways and Means Committee on August 5, 2020, would be a significant step towards a carbon neutral county, in that it would be expected to reduce the carbon footprint by roughly 6 million pounds, or 30%, annually.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board of Commissioners supports the installation of solar arrays as a means to further reduce county emissions, and directs county administration to consider broadly the opportunities for solar installations at all county owned properties, and to plan for the construction of such equipment at the following three facilities: 4135 Washtenaw Avenue, 2140 E. Ellsworth, and 1000 N. Maple, to be included with the next possible construction project.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Washtenaw County reaffirms our commitment to a countywide just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort to reverse global warming, end countywide greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible and no later than 2030, accelerating our previous goal of 2035; and directs county administration to continue working in partnership with the Washtenaw County Environmental Council to develop adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying climate impacts.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Washtenaw County re-commits to educating our residents about the climate emergency and working to catalyze a just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort at the local, state, national, and global levels to provide maximum protection for our residents as well as all the people and species of the world.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Washtenaw County underscores the need for full community participation, inclusion, and support, and recognizes that the residents of Washtenaw County and community organizations, faith, youth, labor, business, academic institutions, homeowners' associations and environmental, economic, racial, gender, family and disability justice and indigenous, immigrant and women's rights organizations and other such allies who will be integral to and in the leadership of the countywide mobilization effort.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Washtenaw County re-commits to keeping the concerns of vulnerable communities central to all just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort planning processes and to inviting and encouraging such communities to actively participate in order to advocate directly for their needs.

COMMISSIONER	Y	N	A	COMMISSIONER	Y	N	A	COMMISSIONER	Y	N	A
Beeman	X			LaBarre	X			Shink	X		
Brabec	X			Maciejewski	X						
Jamnick	X			Morgan	X						
Jefferson	X			Scott	X						

CLERK/REGISTER'S CERTIFICATE - CERTIFIED COPY

ROLL CALL VOTE:

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STATE OF MICHIGAN )

I, Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register of said County of Washtenaw and Clerk of Circuit Court for said County, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of a resolution adopted by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners at a session held at the County Administration Building in the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan, on August 5, 2020, as it appears of record in my office.

COUNTY OF WASHTENAW)<sup>SS</sup>.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Court at Ann Arbor, this 6<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.

LAWRENCE KESTENBAUM, Clerk/Register

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Deputy Clerk



Res. No. 20-122