

RESOLUTION NO. BOS-2019-111

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA DECLARING A CLIMATE  
EMERGENCY THAT DEMANDS IMMEDIATE ACTION TO HALT, REVERSE,  
RESTORE, AND ADDRESS THE CONSEQUENCES AND CAUSES OF  
GLOBAL WARMING**

**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 civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted";

**WHEREAS**, global atmospheric concentrations of other greenhouse gases, including methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons, have also increased substantially since preindustrial times, primarily due to human activities including burning fossil fuels;

**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 that climate change due to global warming has caused substantial interference with and growing losses to infrastructure, property, industry, recreation, natural resources, agricultural 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**, climate-related natural disasters have increased exponentially over the past decade, costing the United States more than double the long-term average during 2014 through

Adopted: 08/27/2019

2018, with total costs of natural disasters during that period of approximately \$100 billion per year;

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found that wide-ranging acute and fatal public health consequences from climate change are impacting communities across the United States;

**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 illnesses, (ii) air quality impacts, (iii) extreme weather events, (iv) vector-borne diseases, (v) waterborne illnesses, (vi) food safety, nutrition, and distribution complications, and (vii) mental health and well-being concerns;

**WHEREAS**, the consequences of climate change are already disproportionately impacting frontline communities and endangering populations made especially vulnerable by existing exposure to extreme weather events, including children, the elderly, and individuals with preexisting disabilities and health conditions;

**WHEREAS**, individuals and families on the front lines of climate change across Santa Clara 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 preexisting challenges;

**WHEREAS**, all communities, whether rural, urban, or suburban, are dramatically affected by climate change, even if their the specific economic, health, social, and environmental impacts may differ;

**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**, climate change is a threat multiplier, with the potential to exacerbate many of the challenges the world already confronts, including conflicts over scarce resources, conditions conducive to violent extremism, the spread of infectious diseases, and the potential to produce new, unforeseeable challenges in the future;

**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**, the climatic changes resulting from global warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, including changes resulting from global warming of more

than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, are projected to result in irreversible, global catastrophic changes to public health, livelihoods, quality of life, food security, water supplies, human security, and economic growth;

**WHEREAS**, in 2019, the United Nations 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**, even with global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, the planet is projected to experience a significant rise in sea levels, extraordinary loss of biodiversity, intensified droughts, prodigious floods, devastating wildfires, and other extreme weather events;

**WHEREAS**, according to climate scientists, addressing the climate emergency caused by global warming will require an economically just and managed phase-out of oil, gas, and coal to keep fossil fuels in the ground;

**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, multilevel, 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 severe existing and projected economic, social, public health, and national security threats posed by the climate crisis;

**WHEREAS**, the massive scope and scale of actions necessary to stabilize the climate will require unprecedented levels of public awareness, engagement, and deliberation to develop and implement effective, just, and equitable policies to address the climate crisis;

**WHEREAS**, the County of Santa Clara 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 Santa Clara County, the State of California, and the United States are guaranteed a strong, viable economic future;

**WHEREAS**, a number of other local jurisdictions and governments in the United States and across the world, including the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Portugal, and Canada, have already declared a climate emergency, and a number of state and local governments are considering declaring a climate emergency in response to the massive challenges posed by the climate crisis; and

**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 Santa Clara, 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 Santa Clara, the State of California, and the United States;

//

//

//

//

//

//

//

//

//

//

//

2. Global climate change demands immediate mobilization of resources and labor at a massive scale and 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.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara, State of California, on August 27, 2019, by the following vote:

AYES: ~~CHAVEZ, CORTESE, ELLENBERG~~  
SIMITIAN, WASSERMAN

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: CHAVEZ

ABSTAIN: NONE

S. JOSEPH SIMITIAN, President  
Board of Supervisors

Signed and certified that a copy of this document has been delivered by electronic or other means to the President, Board of Supervisors.  
ATTEST:

MEGAN DOYLE  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

LIZANNE REYNOLDS  
Deputy County Counsel