

RESOLUTION NO. ____
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY IN
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY THAT DEMANDS ACCELERATED ACTIONS ON THE
CLIMATE CRISIS AND CALLS ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERS TO JOIN
TOGETHER TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE.

RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Contra Costa, State of California,
that:

WHEREAS, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),
increasing emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) will cause global temperatures to rise 1.5
degrees Celsius by as early as 2030; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2019, more than 70 health organizations including the
American Medical Association and the American Public Health Association declared climate
change to be a health emergency and issued a call to action for government, business, and civil
society leaders to recognize climate change as a health emergency; and

WHEREAS, California's Governor Gavin Newsom in Executive Order N-19-19 has
committed state agencies to immediate and bold actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions,
curb the impacts from climate change, and develop a Climate Investment Framework; and

WHEREAS, the State of California has established goals to reduce greenhouse gas
emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, provide 100 percent of the State's electricity
from clean energy sources by 2045, reduce methane emissions and hydrofluorocarbon gases by
40 percent, and add five million zero-emission vehicles to California's roads by 2030 and these
goals imply a zero emissions target date of around 2060; and

WHEREAS, the State of California has recognized the need for careful study and
planning to decrease demand and supply of fossil fuels, while managing the decline in a way that
is economically responsible and sustainable; and

WHEREAS, for Contra Costa County, rising global temperatures will cause sea levels to
rise (up to six feet or more by year 2100 under certain scenarios), contribute to increasingly
extreme weather, including intense rainfall, storms, and heat events, and heightened risk of
wildfires; and

WHEREAS, the consequences of climate change pose risks to life, safety and critical infrastructure in Contra Costa County and throughout the world, and threaten physical, social, and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, climate change impacts in Contra Costa County will be most acutely felt by children, seniors, low income populations, communities of color, and residents with unstable economic or housing situations; and

WHEREAS, the Vulnerability Assessment developed for the Envision Contra Costa 2040 General Plan indicates that the most vulnerable County residents, including households in poverty, low-income households, and persons experiencing homelessness, are more likely to be severely impacted by a changing climate, including flooding, wildfires, extreme heat, and poor air quality; and

WHEREAS, the Vulnerability Assessment also indicates that there is severe vulnerability in the County's agriculture sector, industrial and manufacturing centers, including oil refineries, rangelands, and the Delta due to climate impacts, as well as infrastructure including major roads and highways, flood control, parks and open space, railroads and BART, and wastewater treatment plants and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, fossil fuels are recognized as a primary contributor to the rapidly changing climate; and

WHEREAS, seven of the ten largest industrial pollution sources in the San Francisco Bay Area are located in Contra Costa County; and

WHEREAS, twenty-five census tracts in Contra Costa County are recognized by the State of California as being in the top twenty-five percent of "disadvantaged communities" or "communities of concern" that are disproportionately burdened by sources of pollution; and

WHEREAS, rates of asthma, obesity, and breast, colorectal, lung, and prostate cancer are higher in Contra Costa County than in the rest of California, and in some cases, the nation, particularly in census tracts that are located near large industrial facilities; and

WHEREAS, the world is facing an unprecedented crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has swept across the world causing global human tragedy and an historical economic setback, forcing a rebuild of our economy and a need to introduce the necessary recovery plans to restore sustainable progress and prosperity to the citizens of Contra Costa; and

WHEREAS, long-term exposure to air pollution increases vulnerability to experiencing the most severe COVID-19 outcomes, further burdening the disproportionately affected communities that traditionally carry the brunt of the negative impacts of climate change, particularly in census tracts recognized as disadvantaged communities; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District on June 17, 2020, adopted a *Resolution Condemning Racism and Injustice and Affirming Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion*, which among other things notes that “studies have shown that racial discrimination takes a tremendous toll on the physical and mental health of Black people in the U.S. Racial discrimination is now recognized as a public health crisis,” “These higher death rates are not a random coincidence; but, instead, is the result of systemic racism and a consequential lack of social, economic and political opportunities,” and “community proximity to sources of air pollution is one of these systemic issues,” and resolves “We affirm our commitment to fighting for racial justice and changing the systems that continue to perpetuate racial disparities, especially as they contribute to disproportionate exposure to hazardous air pollution. We vow to use our voice and resources as an ally to the Black community to affect the meaningful and measurable changes that are so urgently needed in the Bay Area;” and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 crisis could mark a turning point in progress on climate change and there will be a need for a resilient recovery after the pandemic, and Contra Costa County’s capacity to act depends largely on our ability to work together in solidarity to build the bridge between fighting COVID-19, biodiversity loss, and climate change; and

WHEREAS, the County has taken a number of actions to address climate change, some of which include: adopting and implementing the 2015 Climate Action Plan; selecting MCE as the electricity provider for unincorporated Contra Costa County, in large part because of the higher clean energy content MCE offers; investing in clean energy, efficient building technologies, and alternative fuels for County operations; providing opportunities to generate more clean energy in Contra Costa County; developing an electric vehicle readiness blueprint; providing energy efficiency programs to County residents; increasing composting and recycling in County facilities; and

WHEREAS, the County is in the process of updating its General Plan, Climate Action Plan, and zoning codes, which provide an opportunity to follow the State’s guidance outlined in the California Air Resources Board *2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan* by taking action to

strengthen policies for the unincorporated County and County operations to better reflect state policies on land use, transportation, energy, natural and working lands, agriculture, conservation, waste management, short-lived climate pollutants, and the built environment; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Action Plan includes goals and specific actions the County will take to address the climate emergency, including future policy direction; and

WHEREAS, County residents in 2019 and 2020 community meetings related to the ongoing update of the County's Climate Action Plan and General Plan have expressed interest in having better access to locally grown fresh food; and

WHEREAS, the current pace of climate actions may still fall short of reducing the projected harm to people and places and accelerated actions need to be taken to reduce our GHG emissions and implement solutions to prepare and protect our communities; and

WHEREAS, by declaring a climate emergency, Contra Costa County will join the over 1,000 national, international and local jurisdictions, including many in the Bay Area, that have made similar declarations that commit to reducing GHG emissions and planning for climate change.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Contra Costa declares a climate emergency that threatens the long-term economic and social well-being, health, safety, and security of the County, and that urgent action by all levels of government is needed to immediately address this climate emergency.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Contra Costa County supports the State of California goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, provide 100 percent of the State's electricity from clean energy sources by 2045, reduce methane emissions and hydrofluorocarbon gases by 40 percent, and add five million zero-emission vehicles to California's roads by 2030, and intends to take actions to help achieve these goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Contra Costa County establish an interdepartmental task force of all Department heads, or their senior deputies, that will focus on urgently implementing the County's Climate Action Plan – as currently adopted and as it may be amended by the Board – and identifying additional actions, policies, and programs the County can undertake to reduce and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. This task force should

report to the Board of Supervisors through the Board's Sustainability Committee and to the County Sustainability Commission on a bi-annual basis starting in November 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Sustainability Commission seek input from the community (with a special focus on highly impacted Environmental Justice communities) to help the County anticipate and plan for an economy that is less dependent on fossil fuels, helps plan for a "Just Transition" away from a fossil-fuel dependent economy, and considers how the County's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic can incorporate the County's climate goals. As the State of California adopts policies and goals for reducing pollution and addressing climate change, the County will develop strategies to improve the health, safety, infrastructure, job opportunities and revenue opportunities during the shift to a zero emission economy. The County will provide special attention to helping develop new opportunities for how frontline and impacted communities will realize economic, health and other benefits. The Commission will include this topic in its ongoing advice to the Board of Supervisors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Contra Costa County should develop policies to require new residential construction to be fully electric through the adoption of reach building codes;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Contra Costa County will prioritize the implementation of its Climate Action Plan in order to achieve greenhouse gas reductions as soon as possible and will consider equity and social justice issues in the implementation of the plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that health, socio-economic, and racial equity considerations must be included in policymaking and climate solutions at all levels and across all sectors as the consequences of climate change have significant impacts on all County residents, especially the young, the elderly, low-income or communities of color, and other vulnerable populations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County calls for all Contra Costa cities and agencies, as well as regional agencies, to also approve a Climate Emergency Declaration to create a unified Countywide voice around climate change and strengthen the call for state and federal actions and funds to address the economic, social, public health, and national security threats posed by the climate crisis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Plan and Climate Action Plan as updated should include land use policies and actions that will facilitate greater availability of fresh food to County residents by creating more opportunities for community gardens, urban gardens, farmers markets, and related policies and programs.

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