

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO  
ENDORISING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY  
Submitted by the Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee  
15 May 2020

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WHEREAS, July 9th, 2019 Mendocino County Board of Supervisors passed RESOLUTION NO. 19-207 creating a Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding implementation of a Mendocino County Sustainability and Climate Action Program; and

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WHEREAS, the October 8, 2018 special report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>1</sup> projected that curtailing warming to 1.5° Celsius (2.7° Fahrenheit) to reduce the risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, economic growth and plant and animal life this century, will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy over the next 12 years; and

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WHEREAS, on September 10, 2018, the State of California's Governor Brown issued an executive order establishing a 2045 statewide target to achieve carbon neutrality<sup>2</sup>, and on the same day, Senate Bill 100 was passed, which sets a 100% clean electricity goal for the State by 2045; and

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WHEREAS, California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment<sup>3</sup> warned that extreme weather and climate-related events in the United States are worsening, predicting increased drought cycles and heat waves in the western U.S. with a resulting three-fold increase in intensity and magnitude of wildfires, declined water supply and snow pack, increased flooding, impacted agriculture, as well as substantial damages to the U.S. economy and human health, unless greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are curbed; and

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WHEREAS, the California Legislature has set clear climate objectives for the next decade, including a 40% reduction in 1990 level GHG emissions by 2030; 50% renewable energy; 50% reduction in petroleum use in vehicles and a doubling of energy efficiency savings in existing buildings<sup>4</sup>; best current research shows that if present trends continue, the total cost of global warming will be as high as 3.6 percent of United States' gross domestic product (USGDP). Four global warming impacts alone – storm damage, real estate losses, energy costs, and water costs – will come with a price tag of 1.8 percent of USGDP, or almost \$1.9 trillion annually (in 2020 dollars) by 2100.<sup>5</sup>

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WHEREAS, Mendocino County has been profoundly affected by several natural disasters due to climate change including severe drought, devastating wildfires (and accompanying days long power outages), flooding, coastal sea rise with severe impacts on coastal near shore ecosystems; and

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WHEREAS, protecting public health should not depend solely on our responses to emergencies that result in loss of tax revenue and costs of increased staff time; rather, the County should focus on preventative measures affecting human activity that threatens climate stability and that have profound effects on the overall health of our County residents; and

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WHEREAS, the residents and businesses of Mendocino County have proven through ballot initiatives, voluntary sustainability initiatives and corporate sustainability commitments a readiness and willingness to meet the challenges of remedying climate change; County residents have voted to eliminate growing GMOs<sup>6</sup>; the County has been on the leading edge of organic and biodynamic farming, natural gas and organically fed food animal production, solar power use, stream and habitat

50 restoration and voluntary forestry certification; and

WHEREAS, the current pace and scale of national climate action is not sufficient to avert substantial damage to the economy, environment, and human health over the coming decades; and

55 WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate requires an emergency mobilization to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, to rapidly and safely draw down or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and to implement measures to protect all people and species; and

60 WHEREAS, in order to avoid irreversible, catastrophic climate change impacts, we cannot only focus on reducing emissions but must also dramatically increase and enable meaningful carbon sequestration while preparing communities now for significant ecological and economic impacts due to climate change;

65 WHEREAS, marginalized communities worldwide – such as people of color, immigrants, indigenous communities, low-income people, those with disabilities, the unhoused – are already disproportionately affected by climate change and must benefit from a just transition to a sustainable and equitable economy; and

70 WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, Mendocino County and the State of California, demonstrated a remarkable capacity to protect human health in the face of a crisis, based on early and preventative actions in response to evidence and warnings issued by scientists. We must apply those lessons by heeding to scientific expertise, planning for the future and asking residents to make sacrifices in order to protect our communities from the similarly devastating effects of climate change.

75 WHEREAS, the County of Mendocino must do everything in its power to encourage a swift conversion to an ecologically, socially, and financially sustainable economy.

80 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the COUNTY OF MENDOCINO declares that a climate emergency threatens humanity and the natural and built environments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the COUNTY OF MENDOCINO joins a worldwide call for a just transition away from fossil fuels and an urgent collaborative climate mobilization effort focused on enacting policies that dramatically reduce heat-trapping emissions, and rapidly catalyzing a mobilization at all levels of government to restore a safe climate; and

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the COUNTY OF MENDOCINO commits to insuring that our actions remain in alignment with the most current scientific findings regarding climate change; and

90 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an urgent global climate mobilization effort to reverse global warming is needed to achieve net zero emissions as quickly as possible and that full community participation, inclusion and support is integral to our efforts to draw down carbon from the atmosphere safely and accelerate adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying climate impacts; and

95 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the COUNTY OF MENDOCINO acknowledges that full public participation of its residents, including its disenfranchised communities, youth, elders, community organizations, labor groups, businesses and academia, is essential to the success of this effort; and

100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the COUNTY OF MENDOCINO commits to ongoing education and active engagement of all County staff, members of committees and commissions, contractors, consultants, residents and independent community groups in alignment with the goals of mitigation, drawdown and adaption; and

105 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors encourages other organizations in the county – school boards, city governments, nonprofits, and local businesses – to adopt and adhere to their own Climate Change Resolutions, thereby showing the County’s intent to create county-wide acknowledgment of the effects climate change will have on our society.

110 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors commits to addressing the climate implications of all policies and actions that come before the Board that have the potential to impact greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration, and disaster preparedness within the County; and the Board of Supervisors commits to drawing on the deliberative work, research, and public outreach of the Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee when considering such policies and actions.

115 Passed and adopted by the Board this      day of                      , 2020.

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footnotes

- 120 1 <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>  
2 <https://www.ca.gov/archive/gov39/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/9.10.18-Executive-Order.pdf>  
3 <http://www.climateassessment.ca.gov/>  
4 <https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/pillars/pillars.htm>  
5 <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/cost.pdf>  
6 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mendocino\\_County\\_GMO\\_Ban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mendocino_County_GMO_Ban)

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Document prepared by Susan Sher, Michael Potts, Cathy Monroe, Patrick Hentschel, Jennifer Mayne, Tess Albin-Smith, and Walter Smith  
last updated 15 May 2020

130 MCCAAC voted to submit this to the Board of Supervisors at their meeting 15 May 2020  
Ayes: Monroe, Mayne, Albin-Smith, Larsen, Sher, Potts, Nickerson, Drell, Hentschel, Jones, Gardea  
Nays: none

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