



DATE: October 9, 2017

AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Environmental Commission

FROM: J. Logan, Staff Liaison

SUBJECT: Recommendation to City Council on Proposed Climate Protection Resolution

BACKGROUND

Climate protection has garnered support throughout the state and country to educate, measure and set standards for reductions in harmful effects to the climate due to trends of global warming.

On June 20, 2017, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors adopted Climate Resolution BOS-2017-85, affirming its commitment to the Paris Climate Accord, environmental sustainability, and combating climate change. In addition to the resolution, the County seeks to enlist other counties and supporters to form a County Climate Coalition. The Los Altos City Council is interested in exploring and potentially adopting a resolution as part of its own statement to combat climate change at the local level.

On August 14, 2017, Los Altos resident and founder of the Healthy Climate Alliance Peter Fiekowsky spoke to the Environmental Commission about his Resolution on Climate Restoration. His resolution affirms a commitment to restoring the climate to pre-1925 levels of CO₂ by 2050 and encourages citizens and agencies to support and fund projects pursuing that goal. Commissioners expressed an interest in hearing more about this resolution and the Healthy Climate Alliance's efforts. The goal of the Resolution on Climate Restoration is to support scientific research on climate restoration and promote the topic into the mainstream conversation. Mr. Fiekowsky and the Healthy Climate Alliance are requesting that Los Altos lead the effort by being the first city to sign and adopt the resolution.

DISCUSSION

Staff requests the Environmental Commission review various climate resolutions and determine if a recommendation will be made to City Council. The Council would like to consider the Commission's recommendations at one of its November 2017 meetings.

Attachments:

- A. Santa Clara County Climate Resolution No. BOS-2017-85 (*Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara Affirming its Commitment to the Paris Climate Accord, Environmental Sustainability, and Combating Climate Change*)
- B. *Proposed Los Altos Resolution for Climate Restoration (Expressing that the City of Los Altos is Committed to Giving our Children the Same Climate our Grandparents Gave us; Restoring a Safe and Healthy Climate)*
- C. Examples of Climate Resolutions: To be distributed at meeting

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
AFFIRMING ITS COMMITMENT TO THE PARIS CLIMATE ACCORD,
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, AND COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE**

WHEREAS, consensus exists among the world's leading climate scientists that we face a major global climate crisis caused by greenhouse gas emissions, with rising sea levels and melting ice sheets creating increasingly unpredictable and unhealthy living environments as we approach a dangerous threshold of global warming; and

WHEREAS, documented impacts of global warming include but are not limited to increased occurrences of extreme weather events, significant impacts to human health and safety, destruction of ecosystems, and reduced economic productivity; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Paris Climate Accord ("Paris Accord") is a historic international agreement reached in 2015 aimed at reducing carbon emissions, slowing rising global temperatures, and helping countries deal with the effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, all but two countries in the world have signed the Paris Accord, committing to enact programs to limit global temperature increase to less than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with an expectation that this goal would be reduced to one and a half degrees in the future; and

WHEREAS, the United States ratified the Paris Accord on September 3, 2016 and committed to its own target of reducing carbon emissions by 26 to 28 percent by 2025;

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2017, President Trump announced his intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris Accord; and

WHEREAS, the United States' withdrawal could result in an additional three billion tons of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere each year, and an additional increase of as much as 0.3 degrees Celsius in global temperatures by end of the century; and

WHEREAS, the State of California is leading the effort to combat climate change and has mandated a statewide reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 by reducing petroleum use in cars and trucks by up to 50%; increasing our electricity derived from renewable sources from one-third to one-half; doubling the energy efficiency savings achieved at existing buildings and making heating fuels cleaner; reducing the release of methane, black carbon, and other short-lived climate pollutants; managing farm and rangelands, forests, and wetlands so they can store carbon; and periodically updating the state's climate adaptation strategy; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Clara’s geographic location makes it particularly vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, drought, flooding, and the concomitant adverse impacts on human health and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the County takes sharp exception to President Trump’s unilateral intention to withdraw from the Paris Accord despite the dire consequences of the planet’s rising temperatures and opposition from communities across the country and world; and

WHEREAS, proactively responding to climate change provides opportunities to be at the forefront of innovation with respect to a broad range of technology, products, services, and know-how that transitioning to a climate-compatible future brings; and

WHEREAS, the County has been and will continue to be a leader in addressing climate change at the local level, having adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2009 and a Sustainability Policy in 2010 and implemented results-oriented strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in a 32.5 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions since 2010; and

WHEREAS, the County has developed over 17 megawatts of renewable solar energy at 15 sites, which will produce an estimated 26.5 million kilowatt-hours of clean electricity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 5,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide during 2017 (equivalent to removing over 1,000 passenger cars from the road for one year); and

WHEREAS, the County has partnered with 11 additional communities to form the Silicon Valley Clean Energy Authority, which has begun providing 100% carbon-free electricity to enrolled customers; and

WHEREAS, the County has achieved a nearly 70% waste diversion rate as of 2015, saving roughly 8,100 tons from landfill disposal and avoiding over 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions (equivalent to removing 5,300 passenger cars from the road for a year); and

WHEREAS, the County has adopted LEED Silver certification as the baseline standard for new County buildings, which requires even greater energy efficiency reductions than those already required in California’s stringent Title 24 building code; and

WHEREAS, the County is one-third of the way to its goal of transitioning 50% of its fleet away from standard internal-combustion engines, to include hybrid-electric, battery-electric, compressed natural gas, and hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles; and

WHEREAS, the County has reduced annual water usage at County facilities by over 65 million gallons since 2009, a reduction of nearly 20%, saving approximately 260,000 kilowatts of electricity per year (equivalent to removing nearly 50 passenger cars from the road each year);

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara, California:

1. The County opposes President Trump's intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris Accord and urges the federal government to maintain and actively work to achieve its commitment to the emissions reductions under the Paris Accord.
2. The County joins cities, counties, and states across the country in committing to the goals of the Paris Accord to combat climate change and promote environmental sustainability.
3. The County will continue its efforts to further the commitment made by the United States under the Paris Accord to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including through its Climate Action Plan, regardless of President Trump's stated intention to revoke the United States' ratification of the Paris Accord.
4. The President of the Board of Supervisors is hereby authorized, on behalf of the County, to join with other groups and coalitions and sign onto other documents supporting the Paris Accord and reflecting the County's continued commitment to combating climate change.
5. The County calls upon all counties, cities, and local governments across the United States to adopt similar commitments to reaffirm the Paris Accord and commit to environmental sustainability and to combat climate change.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara, State of California, on _____ 2017, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

DAVE CORTESE, President
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

MEGAN DOYLE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS _____ AND LEGALITY

R. WILLIAMS
County Counsel

1559394

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RESOLUTION OF THE [GOVERNING BODY] OF THE [JURISDICTION]
AFFIRMING ITS COMMITMENT TO THE PARIS CLIMATE ACCORD,
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, AND COMBATING CLIMATE
CHANGE**

WHEREAS, consensus exists among the world’s leading climate scientists that we face a major global climate crisis caused by greenhouse gas emissions, with rising sea levels and melting ice sheets creating increasingly unpredictable and unhealthy living environments as we approach a dangerous threshold of global warming; and

WHEREAS, documented impacts of global warming include but are not limited to increased occurrences of extreme weather events, significant impacts to human health and safety, destruction of ecosystems, and reduced economic productivity; and

WHEREAS, states and local governments are leading the effort to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions; reducing petroleum use in cars and trucks; increasing electricity derived from renewable sources; increasing the energy efficiency savings achieved at existing buildings and making heating fuels cleaner; reducing the release of methane, black carbon, and other short-lived climate pollutants; managing farm and rangelands, forests, and wetlands so they can store carbon; and periodically updating the state’s climate adaptation strategy; and

WHEREAS, [JURISDICTION]’s geographic location makes it particularly vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, drought, flooding, and the concomitant adverse impacts on human health and the environment; and

WHEREAS, proactively responding to climate change provides opportunities to be at the forefront of innovation with respect to a broad range of technology, products, services, and know-how that transitioning to a climate-compatible future brings; and

WHEREAS, [JURISDICTION] has [INSERT ANY EFFORTS THE JURISDICTION HAS ALREADY TAKEN TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY AND COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE, SUCH AS USE OF RENEWABLE SOLAR ENERGY, REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, REDUCING WATER USAGE, TRANSITIONING ITS FLEET TO ENERGY SAVING VEHICLES, IMPROVING ITS WASTE DIVERSION RATE, MEETING LEED CERTIFICATION FOR ITS BUILDING, ETC.]

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the [GOVERNING BODY] of the [JURISDICTION]:

1. [JURISDICTION] joins the County of Santa Clara and counties and states across the country in committing to the goals of the Paris Accord to combat climate change and promote environmental sustainability.
2. [JURISDICTION] will continue its efforts to further the commitment made by the United States under the Paris Accord to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including through its Climate Action Plan.
3. The President or Presiding Officer of the [GOVERNING BODY] is hereby authorized, on behalf of the [JURISDICTION], to join with other groups and coalitions such as the County Climate Coalition and sign onto other documents supporting the Paris Accord and reflecting [JURISDICTION]'s continued commitment to combating climate change.
4. [JURISDICTION] calls upon all counties and local governments across the United States to adopt similar commitments to reaffirm the Paris Accord and commit to environmental sustainability and to combat climate change.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the [GOVERNING BODY] of the [JURISDICTION], on _____, 2017, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN: _____

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:



City Resolution Cover Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

The Healthy Climate Alliance (HCA) is leading an initiative to commit to giving our children a safe and healthy climate. City resolutions for climate restoration will form the foundation for congressional resolutions, and will alter the funding priorities at the local, university, state and federal levels.

We are asking cities to pass these resolutions now because cities can take this action before anyone else does. Other influential bodies like national organizations and large universities are largely constrained to conform to UN language around climate action, which may take years to change.

The Healthy Climate Alliance (HCA) was established because current conversations around climate change provide goals that fall far short of leaving a healthy planet for our children. Most focus almost entirely on emissions reduction (e.g., the Paris Agreement), even though that alone is not nearly enough to avoid catastrophic warming. We are already seeing the impacts of this warming, and the hazards it poses to the survival of humanity are clear. Increasingly, climate leaders agree that we must focus efforts on removing CO₂ from the atmosphere.

When we shift focus from emissions reduction to CO₂ removal, restoring the climate becomes a possibility. The current UN climate goals as stated in the Paris agreement call for trying to stay below two degrees warming, corresponding to CO₂ levels of 450 ppm. The UN says this level of warming will lead to "grave damage to ecosystems". Humans have never survived long-term with CO₂ levels above 300 ppm.

We, as a society, have accepted two degrees warming as a goal, even knowing that it will be catastrophic for future generations. It is both unwise and immoral to intentionally send our children out into a future climate in which humans and civilization have never survived long term.

For this reason, we are proposing changing the global climate goal to zero degrees warming. We call this "Giving our children the same climate our

grandparents gave us, 300 ppm CO₂ by 2050." Achieving that requires removing a trillion tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere by 2050, and we can do that--if we want to, and if we fund the work.

We have spoken with leadership at the UN, Congress, MIT, Stanford, and Harvard. They all want to add Climate Restoration to the existing goals of mitigation and adaptation, but they can't do it themselves. They need peer-reviewed papers saying that it is a reasonable goal, and they need citizens to demand a healthy climate for our children.

Many influential bodies are constrained by common discourse, which is focused almost entirely on emissions reduction. They can't take action on climate restoration until there is overwhelming demand for it. By joining cities across the nation in passing a resolution demanding a healthy climate for our children, your city can lead the call for a shift in policy and discourse.

We *can* give a healthy climate to our children. Please introduce and pass this resolution so we can get started on the right path.

Feel free to call me if you have any questions or concerns.

Best regards,
[your name]



City Resolution Sample Wording

[City] Resolution for Climate Restoration:

Expressing That the City of [insert] is Committed to Giving Our Children the Same Climate Our Grandparents Gave Us; Restoring a Safe and Healthy Climate.

Whereas we have a moral obligation to give our children and future generations a climate similar to what our grandparents gave us;

Whereas claiming that we do not know how to do it does not absolve us from that obligation;

Whereas we are more likely to leave future generations a healthy climate if we declare a specific goal to do so;

Whereas the human species has never before lived with sustained atmospheric CO₂ above 300 parts per million (ppm), which was exceeded in 1925 and has been rising rapidly ever since;

Whereas current CO₂ levels are about 405 ppm, and are expected to rise to 450 ppm or higher by 2050 based on current, "Paris" goals, and the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that temperatures corresponding to 450 ppm or above will lead to grave damage to ecosystems;

Whereas restoring CO₂ to levels of 300 ppm requires removing about 1 trillion tons of CO₂; and doing that in 20-50 years requires removing 50 gigatons (GT) CO₂ (which is equal to 50 billion tons) per year.

Whereas multiple technologies capable of carbon dioxide removal (CDR) from the atmosphere at 50 GT CO₂ per year have been demonstrated, and annual costs for implementing these methods are expected to be less than 1-2% of global GDP.

Whereas serious research must be initiated to develop the best methods for researchers and innovators to remove all excess CO₂, stop sea-level rise, and restore a safe and healthy climate for our children.

Whereas declaring a goal of restoring a safe and healthy climate for our children will authorize and

encourage scientists to research and funders to invest in the research and development urgently needed.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the city of [insert] is committed to giving our children the same climate our grandparents gave us (300 ppm CO₂); restoring a safe and healthy climate. We hereby encourage our citizens and organizations to promote and fund those projects which lead to achieving that goal, including:

1. Calling upon Congress to commit the US to giving our children the same climate our grandparents gave us and committing resources to the required research and development.
2. Calling upon local universities, charities, and research organizations to commit to giving our children the same climate our grandparents gave us and committing support and resources to the required research and development.
3. Calling upon local businesses to commit to giving our children the same climate our grandparents gave us and committing resources to the required research and development.



Our generation has an obligation to leave our children a climate as healthy as the one our grandparents gave us... *And we can do it.*

The Healthy Climate Alliance (HCA) was established because current conversations around climate change provide goals that fall far short of leaving a healthy planet for our children. Most focus almost entirely on emissions reduction (e.g., the Paris Agreement), even though that alone will not be enough to avoid catastrophic warming. Increasingly, climate leaders agree that we must focus efforts on removing CO₂ from the atmosphere.

When we shift focus from emissions reduction to CO₂ removal, restoring the climate becomes a possibility. The current UN climate goals as stated in the Paris agreement call for trying to stay below two degrees warming, corresponding to CO₂ levels of 450 ppm. The UN also says this level of warming will lead to "grave damage to ecosystems". Humans have never survived long-term with CO₂ levels above 300 ppm.

We, as a society, have accepted two degrees warming as a goal, even knowing that it will be catastrophic for future generations. It is both unwise and immoral to intentionally send our children out into a future climate in which humans and civilization have never survived long term.

The new goal is to give a thriving planet to our children, with 300 ppm CO₂ in the atmosphere by 2050.

It's time to set goals that would allow us to leave a thriving planet to our children—one in which severe weather events once again become the exception rather than the rule, and in which thoughts about our planet are accompanied by a sense of comfort rather than dread.

HCA is generating consensus around this new climate goal by engaging leadership of various fields in the research, conversations, grassroots activities, and other efforts needed. In order to guarantee the survival of future generations, we must set a goal of a stable, pre-industrial CO₂ concentration and achieve it before passing the planet's leadership to the next generation. It's immoral to condemn our children to live in a climate that is hotter than humans have ever survived before.

HCA engages nine key communities to mutually support each other's work.

For example, faith communities build the moral imperative to restore a healthy climate; grassroots activists write letters to the editor and to their representatives; cities take on resolutions supporting climate restoration; and academics research the most effective solutions to restoring a healthy climate.

Where do you fit in? Contact us: healthyclimatealliance.org



Healthy Climate Alliance Timeline

How to restore the climate to 300 ppm CO₂ by 2050

Create Demand 2017	Global Action 2018	Implementation Begun 2025	Goal Achieved 2050
<p>Society declares its commitment to giving our children a healthy climate.</p> <p>A scientific field of climate restoration is established to provide key understandings to rapidly and safely restore the climate.</p> <p>The arts and religion develop popular narratives for humanity inventing its future.</p> <p>Congressional and Parliamentary resolutions are introduced in the US and abroad stating commitment to leaving our children with a climate similar to what our grandparents gave us.</p>	<p>New climate restoration field has research underway into best climate restoration methods.</p> <p>Peer-reviewed publications are produced that give insight and credence to climate restoration methods.</p> <p>IPCC, UN, and the Vatican add climate restoration to their mitigation and adaptation goals.</p> <p>Large-scale demand for climate restoration emerges from city resolutions.</p>	<p>CDR¹ scale-up is started; financing is built up.</p> <p>A stable of technologies evolve for CDR at-scale on land and sea.</p> <p>Multiple financing pathways are developed, including commercial, governmental, military, and philanthropic.</p> <p>Ten year plans for developing public and private support are designed.</p> <p>Pilot CDR projects begin removing leftover CO₂ from the atmosphere.</p>	<p>Atmospheric CO₂ returns to 300 ppm.</p> <p>Twenty years of 50 Gt/year carbon dioxide removal (CDR) has removed a trillion tons of excess atmospheric CO₂.</p> <p>This could cost \$1 trillion/year, which is half of global military spending. The money could come from military budgets.</p>

¹ Carbon Dioxide Removal