

## **City Council Resolution Declaring a Climate Emergency and Proposing Mobilization Efforts to Restore a Safe Climate**

Proposed by City Council Legislative Subcommittee: Lucas Frerichs and Dan Carson  
March 5, 2019

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### **Recommendation**

Approve Resolution No. 19- ----, Series 2019, declaring a climate emergency and proposing a regional mobilization effort to restore a safe climate.

### **Fiscal Impact**

There is no immediate fiscal impact, however the resolution calls for city action on a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update and other policy responses to climate change, which may have fiscal impacts at a later date. The resolution also calls for maximum efforts to implement carbon reduction actions by 2030, and accelerate the existing 2050 net carbon neutrality goal for the Davis community to a 2040 target.

### **City Council Goals**

- Pursue environmental sustainability
- Drive a diverse and resilient economy
- Ensure a safe and healthy community

### **Background and Analysis**

In December 2018, a group of Davis citizens, led by Lynne Nittler and Lorenzo Kristov, began to work on a locally crafted resolution, as promoted by the Climate Mobilization Movement. Additional participants included Chris Granger, Robin Kozloff, Elizabeth Lasensky, Greg Miller, Steve Nyholm and Denise Peach.

Following coordination with Chris Brown, a statewide leader of the Climate Mobilization Movement, the group crafted a draft resolution specifically for Davis, using similar resolutions from other California cities as a guide. At a meeting on January 27, 2019, City Council members on the legislative subcommittee, Lucas Frerichs and Dan Carson, and city staff member Kerry Loux, met with the group to discuss the draft resolution. Following edits recommended at this meeting and subsequent coordination, the final proposed resolution has the support of the City Council legislative subcommittee.

The Climate Mobilization Movement is a global network of people in North America, Europe and Australia dedicated to engaging the public and government agencies to prevent climate and ecological catastrophe by asking for a response to climate change and ecological destruction as an emergency.

According to the website, the cities of Oakland, Berkeley, Chico, Los Angeles and Santa Cruz, among others in California, have adopted Climate Emergency and Mobilization Resolutions. Sacramento and West Sacramento are working on their resolutions presently.

Because cities have often been the source of national progress, from minimum wage to civil rights, the mobilization group is targeting cities as leaders of emergency climate mobilization, and subsequently pushing for state and national mobilization. Goals and strategic priorities of the Climate Mobilization Movement include the following:

1. Pass declarations of Climate Mobilization with aggressive commitments to reach zero emissions and begin carbon drawdown at emergency speed (10 years or less).
2. Develop and implement mobilization policy locally.
3. Cities act as advocates for emergency Climate Mobilization to the public, to other cities, and at state and national levels.

There have been significant recent climate events that have impacted California and our Sacramento/Yolo communities in a direct manner. Scientific evidence shows that climate change is continuing to occur in California and is having significant, measurable impacts on the state and its people. An increasingly troubling story of accelerating rates of warming, record-breaking events, and species responses that have the potential to cause ecosystem disruptions has emerged. These include, but are not limited to the following:

1. **High heat days, deteriorated air quality and public health impacts.** Extreme heat days are increasing significantly, especially in the Central Valley. Hotter temperatures lead to more smog, which can damage lungs, increase childhood asthma, and cause respiratory/heart disease and death. “Certain segments of the population are at greater risk, including the elderly, infants, persons with chronic heart or lung disease, people who can’t afford air conditioning, and those who work outdoors”, according to California Attorney General Xavier Becerra’s office.
2. **Lasting droughts.** From 2011-2017, California experienced severe water shortage. This extended period of water emergency triggered state regulatory actions and local water conservation mandates.
3. **Sierra forest tree mortality.** The United States Forest Service survey released February 2019 found that more than 147 million trees have died across 9.7 million acres of federal, state, local and private lands in California since the drought began in 2010, greatly increasing wildfire risk. Even though the six-year drought officially ended with the 2016-2017 winter season, 2017-2018 precipitation levels were below average and slowed the recovery of the state’s surviving tree forests.
4. **Increased number and intensity of wildfires.** The October 2017 Northern California wildfires, including the Tubbs fire, caused more than \$9.4 billion in damage, destroyed over 8,900 structures in Santa Rosa, displaced many people, killed 44 and injured another 192. In 2018, just a month after several devastating fires including the destructive Carr fire in Redding which killed 3 firemen and 2 civilians and destroyed 1,604 structures, the Camp fire - the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in state history - left 88 dead and took an unimaginable toll on public health, public safety, air, water, health, taxpayer funded services, and economic base. The entire town of Paradise was displaced, making some residents into climate refugees as well as impacting ‘receiving cities’. The fire destroyed 18,806 structures, and crippled the extended region, including Davis, with severely unhealthy air quality for weeks after.
5. **Severe rainfall and resulting floods, mudslides.** In February 2017, rainfall across northern and central California resulted in at least 5 deaths and an estimated \$1.5 billion in damage, including damage to the Oroville Dam spillway, causing a multi-day evacuation of 188,000 residents, some of whom were temporarily placed at the Yolo County Fairgrounds.

### Additional context and research related to climate change

The following background documents and research are available for more information:

- Information about [The Climate Mobilization](http://www.theclimatemobilization.org/) network can be found at [www.theclimatemobilization.org/](http://www.theclimatemobilization.org/).
- Indicators of climate change in California can be found at <https://oehha.ca.gov/climate-change/report/2018-report-indicators-climate-change-california>.
- In 2018, the **4<sup>th</sup> Annual National Climate Assessment** <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> and **California's 4<sup>th</sup> Climate Change Assessment** <http://www.climateassessment.ca.gov/> warned that extreme weather and climate-related events in the U.S. 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, impacted agriculture, eroded beaches from sea level rise, declined snow pack, increased flooding, as well as substantial damages to the U.S. economy and human health, unless greenhouse gas emissions are curbed.
- The 2018 **Special Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** provides information on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>.
- The World Scientists' *Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice (2017)* calls for a drastic change in how ecological resources are managed, and includes 15,364 scientist signatories from 184 countries. <http://scientistswarning.forestry.oregonstate.edu/additional-signatories> William J. R., et al. *BioScience*, 67 (12), 1026–1028 <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix125>; *Alliance of World Scientists. (2018). Additional Signatories.*
- The **Paris Climate Agreement** was signed by 195 nations at the 2015 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The agreement text can be found at [https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris\\_nov\\_2015/application/pdf/paris\\_agreement\\_english\\_pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/paris_agreement_english_pdf)
- Information on critical tipping points can be found at Hausfather, Z. (2018). *Analysis: How much 'carbon budget' is left to limit global warming to 1.5C?* *Carbon Brief*. <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-how-much-carbon-budget-is-left-to-limit-global-warming-to-1-5c>. The article notes that these tipping points can have cascading feedback effects that are predicted to cause an increasingly uncontrollable climate emergency. With current greenhouse gas emission levels these tipping points could be passed as soon as 2050.