

Proposed Climate Emergency Resolution

Updated on July 3, 2019

Extinction Rebellion Fort Collins (XR FC) and the Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) are calling on the City of Fort Collins to declare a Climate Emergency. We have submitted a resolution to City Council that would do just that. The resolution would also a) direct City staff to establish future reviews of the City's 2030 and 2050 climate goals, b) direct City staff to include representatives of indigenous communities displaced from Northern Colorado on the Climate Action Plan Community Advisory Committee, c) direct City staff to educate the community about the climate crisis, and d) call on other governments and people around the world to initiate a Climate Emergency Mobilization and Just Transition effort.

At the end of the Council meeting on July 2, Julie Pignataro and four other councilmembers asked the City Attorney to develop a resolution based on the one we presented earlier that evening. The text of our proposed resolution follows.

RESOLUTION 2019-XX OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, the Fort Collins City Council adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 1998 to promote social equity, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality for all residents and businesses of Fort Collins and has updated it twice, the last time being on March 3rd, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the current Fort Collins CAP recognizes the 2015 Climate Action Plan Framework ("2015 CAP Framework"), which contains a high level analysis of the strategies necessary to reduce Fort Collins's community-wide greenhouse gas emissions and established goals to reduce emissions to 20% below 2005 levels by 2020; and additionally, established the goals of reducing emissions to 80% below 2005 levels by 2030 and to be carbon neutral by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the City government is currently engaged in a two year effort to update its Climate Action and Energy Policies in order to meet the City's 2030 goals, with input from a Community Advisory Committee, which consists of residents who provide diverse perspectives, social networks, and expertise that is critical for successful implementation of the CAP; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 CAP Framework acknowledges that it does not provide "a definitive and inflexible roadmap", since "technologies and markets will continue to evolve, financing structures and

opportunities may continue to expand, and scientific findings regarding climate change may continue to evolve over time;” and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Collins has signed onto the Compact of Colorado Communities, the Colorado Communities for Climate Action, the U.S. Climate Mayors group which has agreed to uphold the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement goals, and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy; and

WHEREAS, the primary goal of the Fort Collins CAP and the climate action groups to which it is a signatory is the reduction of community-wide carbon emissions as much and as quickly as possible; and

WHEREAS, Fort Collins achieved greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 17% compared to 2005 levels in 2017, and appears to be on track to meet its emissions reduction goal for 2020, and

WHEREAS, despite the efforts of Fort Collins and other cities, states, and countries that have established greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and are making progress toward achieving those goals, global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to rise since 2005, and

WHEREAS, the death and destruction already wrought by global warming of approximately 1°C demonstrate that the Earth is already too hot for safety and justice as attested by increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, arctic melting, rising seas, diseases, droughts, extreme weather, and climate refugees; and

WHEREAS, climate change and the global economy’s overshoot of ecological limits are driving the sixth mass extinction of species, which could devastate much of life on Earth within the coming century; and

WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate will necessitate a Climate Emergency Mobilization on a scale significantly greater than that achieved by Fort Collins and like-minded cities, states, and countries to date, which will require reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions across all economic sectors at great speed, to rapidly and safely draw down or remove excess carbon from the atmosphere, and to implement measures to protect all people and species from the consequences of abrupt climate change; and

WHEREAS, the State of Colorado recently adopted “Just Transition” legislation (House Bill 2019-1314), which has the goal of beginning to shift Colorado’s economy, which is currently heavily reliant on coal, to one that is more ecologically sustainable, equitable and just for all residents; and

WHEREAS, Just Transition initiatives generally attempt to shift the economy from dirty energy to clean energy, from funding highways to expanding public transit, from incinerators and landfills to zero waste, from industrial food systems to food sovereignty, from car-dependent sprawl and unbridled growth to smart urban development without displacement, and from rampant, destructive over-development to habitat and ecosystem restoration; and

WHEREAS, justice requires that indigenous and frontline communities, which have historically borne the brunt of the extractive fossil-fuel economy, participate actively in the planning and implementation of Just Transition efforts at all levels of government and that they benefit first from the transition to a renewable energy economy; and

WHEREAS, the indigenous communities that were displaced as the United States of America expanded westward into what is today known as northern Colorado, and which include the tribes today known as the Ute, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Lakota, Apache, and Comanche, are not currently represented on the CAP Community Advisory Committee;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS as follows:

Section 1: That the City Council declares a climate emergency threatens Fort Collins, the State of Colorado, the United States of America, all other nations, and indeed, the entire world.

Section 2: That the Council re-affirms its commitment to the goals set forth in the 2015 CAP Framework, and directs the City government to consider strengthening the goal established for 2030 no later than 2024 and the goal established for 2050 no later than 2029, to ensure that those goals remain in alignment with current scientific findings regarding climate change.

Section 3: That the Council directs the City government to expand the CAP Community Advisory Committee to include representation from as many indigenous communities displaced from northern Colorado as possible.

Section 4: That the Council directs the City government to educate our residents about the climate emergency in order to help catalyze a Climate Emergency Mobilization and Just Transition effort at the

local, state, national, and global levels to provide maximum protection for our residents as well as all the people and species of the world.

Section 5: That the Council calls on the State of Colorado, the United States of America, and all governments and peoples worldwide to initiate a Climate Emergency Mobilization and Just Transition effort to reverse global warming by restoring near pre-industrial global average temperatures and greenhouse gas concentrations, that halts the development of new fossil fuel infrastructure, rapidly phases out all fossil fuels and the technologies which rely upon them, transitions to regenerative agriculture, works to end the sixth mass extinction, and creates and guarantees high-quality, good-paying jobs with comprehensive benefits for those who will be impacted by this transition.