

FCSG Statement on Climate Mayors' Letter

Statement updated on January 19, 2017

The Fort Collins City Council voted 5-2 on January 17th to “endorse and support” the Climate Mayor’s letter. Mayor Wade Troxell became the 66th U.S. mayor to sign the letter on January 18th. The letter and its signatories may be viewed here: <http://www.climate-mayors.org/our-letter-to-the-presidentelect-november-2016>.

Thanks to members of 350 Fort Collins, the Sierra Club, and Fort Collins for Progress who joined with the FCSG to support passage of the Climate Mayors’ letter resolution!

The following statement was originally posted on January 12, 2016

At the Fort Collins City Council meeting held on January 3rd, 2017, one council member stated that he hesitated to endorse signing on to the Climate Mayor’s letter (see additional information posted below) because of the support that letter expresses for the Paris Climate Agreement. “My issue is we are not a partisan council,” he said. “I don’t want to be a partisan council.”

The Paris Climate Agreement is not a partisan document. It calls on signatories “to limit the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels,” and to establish national emissions reduction targets supportive of the world-wide goal. The only “partisanship” issue associated with the Paris Climate Agreement is that the vast majority of Republicans in Congress oppose any federal action on climate change, despite the scientific consensus on the urgency of this problem.

At its next regular meeting on January 17th, City Council will again discuss whether or not to support the Climate Mayors’ letter. The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) urges council members to do so, for the following reasons:

1. Mayor Troxell signed an earlier letter from the Climate Mayors in June of 2015. The letter states in part, “We are writing to call on you to act in the best interests of the American people and fight for the strongest possible climate agreement at the upcoming 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris, and for federal action to establish binding national greenhouse gas emissions reductions here at home. The United States can and should be the leader in the transition to a clean energy economy” (<http://climatemayors.tumblr.com/post/121872120221/our-letter-to-the-president>).
2. A primary goal of the Paris Climate Agreement is to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Agreement). This is consistent with Fort Collins 2015 Climate Action Plan Framework.
3. The Paris Climate Agreement calls on each signatory nation to establish its own emissions reduction contribution targets to achieve the worldwide goal, to report these contributions every five years, and to make those contributions progressively more ambitious. Efforts by cities represent an important way for the United States to meet this requirement of the Paris Climate Agreement, and Fort Collins has already established itself as a leader in this area.

Partisanship should play no role in addressing the planetary crisis of climate change. By rising above partisanship on this issue, Fort Collins City Council members can help show other elected leaders the path forward.

The following statement was originally posted on December 20, 2016

On November 22nd, a group of U.S. Mayors sent a letter to President-elect Donald Trump asking him to support their efforts to combat climate change. They called upon Trump to provide funding for transit- and energy-related infrastructure improvements, to continue offering tax credits for electric vehicles, renewables, and other clean technologies, and to embrace the Paris Climate Agreement. Mayors from around the country continue to sign the letter, and to date 48 mayors have done so, including those of Denver, Longmont, Boulder, and Aspen.

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) calls on Mayor Wade Troxell to sign the Climate Mayors' letter on behalf of Fort Collins. Our City has some of the most ambitious climate goals in the world, which are to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, and to achieve carbon neutrality (net zero emissions) by 2050. Achieving these goals will require moving quickly to replace fossil fuel-generated electricity with renewably-generated electricity, continuing to build an energy-efficient public transit system, and increasing the use of electric vehicles – all of which can and should be promoted by federal policies.

Several council members have suggested that the City should write its own letter to President-elect Trump to let him know about our goals and accomplishments to date. While the FCSG supports writing a letter on behalf of the City of Fort Collins, we do not believe it would have the same impact as joining other cities in a nationwide effort calling for federal policies that would advance all of our efforts.

Donald Trump's choices for key executive-branch positions including Secretary of State, Secretary of Energy, and Environmental Protection Agency Director have records of action and stated beliefs that are in most cases diametrically opposed to taking the action needed to address global climate change and the threats it poses to our national security and to human societies generally. He needs to hear from all of us – including our Mayor – that it is unacceptable at this point in history for a U.S. President to fail to take climate change seriously, and that we need the active support of the Federal Government to address this critical problem. Signing the Climate Mayors' letter would be a clear way to communicate this message.

Note: The Climate Mayors' letter is available here:

<http://www.climate-mayors.org/our-letter-to-the-presidentelect-november-2016>

Update: City council considered this issue formally on Tuesday, January 3rd, at which point council members opted to table the issue until their meeting on Tuesday, January 17th. Additionally, Mayor Troxell sent a separate letter to President-elect Trump on January 3rd, which may be viewed here: <http://www.fcgov.com/news/?id=6643>.