

Introduced by the Human Services and County Services Committees of the:

INGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION TO DECLARE A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continues to document increasing levels of greenhouse gas emissions, largely from transportation, residential and commercial buildings, industrial sources, agricultural practices and the handling of waste, all of which heavily contribute to warming our climate; and

WHEREAS, the consensus conclusion of scientific and policy assessments from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change calls for urgent and decisive actions by governments around the world to make “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” in order to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius to avoid the most disastrous impacts; and

WHEREAS, the federal U.S. Fourth National Climate Assessment detailed the massive threat that climate change poses to the American economy and underscored the need for emergency climate action at all levels of government; and

WHEREAS, the temperature in Verkhoyansk, Siberia hit 101 degrees Fahrenheit on June 20, 2020, the hottest temperature ever recorded in the Arctic Circle; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Law & Policy Center’s 2019 Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change on the Great Lakes highlighted the significant impacts in our own backyard, including the flooding of streets, homes and agricultural areas, power outages, record low and high temperatures, delayed planting, and weather-related school and business closures; and

WHEREAS, the Ingham County Board of Commissioners on June 9, 2020, formally declared racism a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, the economic and environmental hardships related to climate warming disproportionately affect underserved populations, particularly Black and Latino residents; and

WHEREAS, the National Centers for Disease Control has unequivocally stated that climate change affects health, resulting in further untold costs to citizens, especially people of color and low-income residents; and

WHEREAS, people of color in the U.S. are 38% more likely to be exposed to the asthma-causing pollutant nitrogen oxide from climate-warming cars, construction equipment, and industrial sources like coal plants, according to a 2014 study from the University of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, more than 1,000 local governments in 18 countries have already signed emergency declarations, including, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo and Washtenaw County; and

WHEREAS, the most recent meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors issued a resolution declaring a climate emergency and calling for decarbonization in time to keep the global rise in temperatures to a 1.5-degree Celsius level and emphasizing that such efforts must involve local governments and their jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, Ingham County's five-year strategic action plan, which outlines the County's vision, values and resource allocations, distinguishes services to residents first, in addition to monitoring environmental hazards and environmental protection; and

WHEREAS, a formal declaration of a climate emergency by Ingham County can help provide the catalyst to mobilize residents, businesses, institutions, faith, civil rights and community organizations to work together to prioritize the immediate reduction of CO2 emissions and support the County's efforts to plan for community resilience and adaptation under environmental threat.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ingham County Board of Commissioners hereby declares a climate emergency for Ingham County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the intent of this declaration is to build awareness and urgency to develop sustainable practices in County government, including identifying and implementing environmental programming into its existing commitments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Ingham County accepts a role of regional leadership, and as such will seek partnerships with other regional governments, businesses, community groups, educational and other anchor institutions to best utilize regional expertise and resources to meet shared goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Ingham County will, expeditiously and with serious determination, seek any available state, federal, and private funding for this effort and form alliances with other Michigan cities that have declared a climate emergency or have a written climate action plan to lobby for such funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Ingham County will underscore the need for full community participation, inclusion, and support for the climate mobilization effort.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Ingham County commits to keeping the concerns of vulnerable communities central to these efforts and will proactively invite and encourage underserved and vulnerable communities to actively participate in order to advocate directly for their needs.