

Sponsors: Knox and Christianson

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

**I MOVE TO** approve Resolution 2020-03 on first and final reading declaring a climate emergency and mobilization effort to adapt to a changing climate.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-03

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND MOBILIZATION EFFORT TO ADAPT TO A CHANGING CLIMATE**

**WHEREAS**, in April 2016 world leaders recognized the urgent need to combat climate change it by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep global warming “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C;”and

**WHEREAS**, the climate crisis in Alaska is changing at a more rapid rate than most of the rest of the globe including alarming changes in our marine and coastal environments including fisheries, marine mammal migrations, extreme weather events, glacial melt and snow pack changes; and

**WHEREAS**, the climate emergency also disproportionately impacts the indigenous people of Alaska and their traditional ways of life, which is particularly threatened due to their reliance on Alaska's natural systems, which they have been stewards of since time immemorial; a fact recognized by the Alaska Federation of Natives, the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska with a membership including tribes, village and regional corporations, and regional nonprofit tribal consortiums, which recently declared a climate emergency through a resolution that was put forward by Alaska Native youth leaders to express their concern and demand action for the survival of their future generations, ways of life, traditional lands, and intact ecosystems which are threatened by current and projected climatic changes; and

**WHEREAS**, the citizens of Sitka are reliant on our oceans and forests and the wildlife and resources contained within them, in our economies, including fisheries, and tourism, and our way of life, including subsistence food gathering, and a cultural and historical importance; and

**WHEREAS**, the City and Borough of Sitka supports all cultural, traditional and subsistence activities historically and continually practiced by Native and non-Native peoples in the State of Alaska and these practices are being irreparably harmed by major changes in our climate; and

**WHEREAS**, the citizens of Sitka recognize that global climate change includes the general warming of the climate, arctic melting, ocean acidification, and increase in severe weather events, from drought conditions and severe winter snows to massive precipitation events like the one experienced in Sitka on August 18, 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, the death and destruction already wrought by current average global warming of 1°C above pre-industrial levels demonstrate that the Earth is already too hot for safety and justice; and

44 **WHEREAS**, a January 2019 report by the Department of Defense, "Report on Effects of a  
45 Changing Climate to the Department of Defense", points to serious concerns of global military  
46 based security due to changes in climate, weather events, rise in sea levels and opening of Arctic  
47 waterways previously not navigable; and  
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49 **WHEREAS**, adapting to this changing climate requires an Emergency Climate Mobilization at all  
50 levels of government in order to move towards a rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions  
51 across all sectors of the economy; to safely drawdown and remove excess carbon from the  
52 atmosphere at emergency speed including protecting current natural carbon absorbing resources  
53 like the Tongass National Forest; and to implement measures to help all people to adapt to abrupt  
54 climate breakdown; and  
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56 **WHEREAS**, necessary measures to limit climate changes include:

- 57 a) A rapid, just, and managed reduction on the dependence of fossil fuels;
- 58 b) Maximizing all city and community use of zero emission energy resources and further  
59 exploring our capacity to produce green electricity at a local and regional level;
- 60 c) A widespread effort to protect our regional environmental ability to safely drawdown excess  
61 carbon from the atmosphere and restore ecosystems critical to fish habitat;
- 62 d) Supporting and funding efforts to address ocean acidification, warming, and the  
63 catastrophic changes in the marine environment; and
- 64 e) Priority should be given to protections through widespread conservation and restoration of  
65 ecosystems; and  
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67 **WHEREAS**, necessary measures to adapt to climate changes and resulting economic disruption  
68 include:

- 69 a) Increasing food security by stimulating local food production and safe storage;
- 70 b) Recognizing need for the fisheries to conserve fossil fuel while transitioning to green energy  
71 and preparing for job change as a result of possible collapse of usual global markets;
- 72 c) Strengthening community to meet change and collective hardship, by building bridges  
73 among segments of the community that historically did not respect or learn from each other  
74 or solve problems together. The Alaska native community has expertise in subsistence  
75 practices that may be critical in the event of climate or economic collapse;
- 76 d) Involving the public, schools, SEARHC, and Sitka Tribe of Alaska to build climate  
77 awareness, engagement, and deliberation to develop and implement effective, just, and  
78 equitable policies to address the climate emergency; and  
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80 **WHEREAS**, indigenous peoples' culture, historical homes, and subsistence gathering practices are  
81 disproportionately impacted by climate change, tribal entities should be invited to participate  
82 actively in the planning and implementation of this mobilization effort to ensure that Alaska natives  
83 benefit first from adaptation measures.  
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85 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka  
86 declares that a climate and ecological emergency threatens our city, region, state, nation,  
87 civilization, humanity and the natural world; and



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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka directs the Administrator to work with all City of Sitka Departments, and commissions to report back within 1 year of the date of the signed declaration on maximum reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from their operations feasible by the end of 2025; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka directs the Administrator to work with the Planning Department and Planning Commission to report back on opportunities for radical greenhouse gas and co-pollutant emissions reductions and greenhouse gas drawdown opportunities through updates to the City of Sitka Comprehensive Plan, including metrics that prioritize avoidance of fossil fuel use and climate-adaptive land use planning; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka directs the Administrator and the Local Emergency Planning Commission to report back within 1 year on opportunities and funding to address the climate emergency and its impacts through existing hazard mitigation programs and through new subcommittees and programs as necessary to address measures above to limit global warming and to assist in adaptation of the Sitka Community; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka directs the Administrator to explore the mechanisms for joint planning of response to the climate emergency with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and other native entities as the Tribe suggests; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** in furtherance of this resolution, the City and Borough of Sitka shall submit a certified copy of this resolution to the Office of the Governor of Alaska, the Alaska House of Representatives and Alaska Senate, the Alaska Federal Delegation, the Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, and the Office of the President of the United States of America.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of February 2020.

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Gary L. Paxton, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Sara Peterson, MMC  
Municipal Clerk

1<sup>st</sup> and final reading 2/25/2020

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