

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON
RESOLUTION NO. **NUMBER****

**A RESOLUTION OF ISLAND COUNTY,
WASHINGTON, Declaring a Climate Emergency**

WHEREAS, even on our relatively privileged and protected island, we currently face increased mortality of Western Red Cedar and Hemlock trees in Island County, persistent drought, wildfires and smoke, and declining populations of marine life such as chinook salmon, bull kelp, and Southern Resident orca whales, and these manifestations of the climate crisis threaten our local economy and quality of life, and

WHEREAS, the climate crisis' impact is seen through the recent Category 4 atmospheric river that hit Washington State. "King" tides and strong wind pushed water ashore causing mass flooding throughout Washington, especially near western rivers. 38 avalanches affected the state after record breaking rain and snow¹. More atmospheric rivers are set to hit Washington in 2022 as the climate crisis worsens², and

WHEREAS, in June of 2021 the temperature in Seattle reached 108 degrees, an all time record. From June 27th to 29th, three out of the four hottest temperatures ever recorded there occurred³. 2021 stands as the only year with more than one day hitting temperatures over 100 degrees in Seattle. Other record breaking temperatures affected millions without air conditioning throughout Washington. Climate Scientists and Meteorologists worry that as climate change continues, heat waves could become more frequent and even more severe, impacting communities of color the most⁴, and

WHEREAS, as of right now 85% of all humans have been impacted by climate change⁵. This statistic will continue to grow, as one in three Americans were impacted by a climate disaster in a short time of just three months during the Summer of 2021⁶. This base of statistical evidence just begins to show how much this crisis is affecting human life, and

¹Theresa Waldrop, "Washington digs out after record-breaking weather leads to 38 avalanches," *CNN*, Jan 8, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/08/us/washington-snow-rain-landslides-flooding/index.html>.

²Jason Samenow, "Atmospheric river spurs severe flooding in Washington state," *The Washington Post*, Jan 7, 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2022/01/07/washington-state-flooding-chehalis-avalanche/>.

³Daniel Wu, "3 of Seattle's 4 hottest days on record just happened," *The Seattle Times*, Jun 29, 2021. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/3-of-seattles-4-hottest-days-on-record-just-happened/>.

⁴Seattle Office for Civil Rights, "Seeking Environmental Justice: Heat waves disproportionately affect BIPOC communities," *City of Seattle*, Jul 13, 2021. <https://ocr.seattle.gov/environmental-justice-heat-waves/>.

⁵Julia Jacobo, "Human-induced climate change may affect 85% of the global population, researchers say," *ABC News*, Oct 11, 2021. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/human-induced-climate-change-affect-85-global-population/story?id=80523851>.

⁶Sarah Kaplan and Andrew Ba Tran, "Nearly 1 in 3 Americans experienced a weather disaster this summer," *The Washington Post*, Sep 4, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2021/09/04/climate-disaster-hurricane-ida/>.

WHEREAS, the International Energy Agency in 2011 ascertains that we must stop investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure by 2017 to have a chance of limiting warming to 2.0°C⁷. Four banks in the United States alone increased their investments in fossil fuel infrastructure to \$580 billions since 2015⁸, and

WHEREAS, the fossil fuel industry continues to make record profits while polluting water, land, and air; seizes land from indigenous peoples and people of color; and avoids paying taxes⁹; it continues to target indigenous women and women of color¹⁰ by perpetuating communal violence, for example by implementing “man camps”¹¹; and has its interests protected by both local police and the military¹², and

WHEREAS, the United States bears a huge responsibility for this crisis, since it has emitted more CO₂ than any other country to date, is responsible for 25% of historical emissions, and still has one of the highest CO₂ emissions per capita of any country in the world¹³, and

WHEREAS, the MCC Carbon Clock¹⁴ showed that we ran out of time on September 8, 2018 to limit global warming to 1.5°C; they downgraded our chances of survival from 50% to 33% in order to add nine years to our so-called carbon budget¹⁵. We have less than a 1% chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C¹⁶, and

WHEREAS, climate action should be implemented in an equitable way, and accountable to historically marginalized communities. The communities least responsible for the climate

⁷“The world is locking itself into an unsustainable energy future which would have far-reaching consequences, IEA warns in its latest World Energy Outlook,” *International Energy Agency*, Nov 9, 2011.

<https://www.iea.org/newsroom/news/2011/november/the-world-is-locking-itself-into-an-unsustainable-energy-future.html>.

⁸*Banking on Climate Change: Fossil Fuel Finance Report Card 2019*, Rainforest Action Network, Mar 20, 2019.

<https://www.ran.org/bankingonclimatechange2019/>, Full report

https://www.ran.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Banking_on_Climate_Change_2019_vFINAL.pdf (PDF).

⁹“Fossil fuels received an \$8.2 billion tax bailout and slashed nearly 60,000 jobs last year” *BailoutWatch*, Apr 2, 2021.

<https://bailoutwatch.org/analysis/fossil-fuel-firmsslashed-nearly-60000-jobs-in-2020/>; “The absurd truth about fossil fuel subsidies” *Generation180*, Nov 25, 2020. <https://generation180.org/the-absurd-truth-about-fossil-fuel-subsidies/>; “Oil How Oil Companies Pay Such Low Taxes” *Investopedia*, Sep 15, 2019.

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/011216/understanding-how-oil-companies-pay-taxes.asp>.

¹⁰“Climate change is a matter of gender and racial justice,” *COFEM*, Sep 30, 2019.

<https://cofemsocialchange.org/climate-change-is-a-matter-of-gender-and-racial-justice/>; “An estimated 80% of the people displaced by climate change are women of color in communities ranging from Puerto Rico to Cameroon to New Orleans to Pakistan.”

¹¹“Man camps” house workers that are directly connected to the building and maintenance of fossil fuel infrastructure. Through these “man camps” the fossil fuel industry directly contributes to the number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). “Why Aren’t Fossil Fuel Companies Held Accountable for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women?” *YES! Magazine*, Oct 5, 2019.

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/environment/2019/10/05/native-fossil-fuel-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-mmiwg>.

¹²The fossil fuel industry uses these two forces (local police and military) to forcibly remove peaceful protestors and remove indigenous people from their own unceded land. “Big Oil is paying the police for protection. Here’s why that’s a problem” *Global Witness*, Apr 1, 2021. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/blog/big-oil-is-paying-the-police-for-protection-heres-why-thats-a-problem/>.

¹³Ritchie and Roser, “CO₂ and Greenhouse Gas Emissions,” *Our World in Data*, revised Aug, 2020.

<https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions>.

¹⁴“That’s how fast the carbon clock is ticking,” *Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change*, updated Summer 2021. <https://www.mcc-berlin.net/en/research/co2-budget.html>.

¹⁵Richard Roberts, “A 6-point plan for building a new carbon economy,” *Fast Company*, Sep 10, 2018.

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90233607/a-6-point-plan-for-building-a-new-carbon-economy>.

¹⁶Oliver Milman, “Planet has just 5% chance of reaching Paris climate goal, study says,” *The Guardian*, Jul 31, 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/31/paris-climate-deal-2c-warming-study>.

crisis are often most vulnerable to its effects, and we have a moral responsibility to listen to them, believe them, follow their lead, and prioritize their survival, and

WHEREAS, Earth is already 1.1°C warmer than pre-industrial levels, and the best available science shows that we must limit warming to 1.5°C in order to avoid tipping points and feedback loops¹⁷ leading to irreversible climate disasters¹⁸, and

WHEREAS, in order to limit warming to 1.5°C, only a finite amount of CO₂ can be emitted worldwide. At current emissions rates we will have used up that “carbon budget” by 2030¹⁹, and

WHEREAS, global average temperatures are now 1.1°C above the pre-industrial average, and for each additional half degree of warming the number and severity of climate impacts doubles: “Leading scientists recently published a study warning a domino effect of climate events could easily move Earth into a ‘hothouse’ state, making any efforts to reduce emissions increasingly futile.”²⁰ Promises made as part of the Paris climate agreement would lead to about 3.0°C of warming by 2100²¹, and

WHEREAS, at 1.1°C of warming, we are now experiencing the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth, in addition to increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, rising seas, diseases, droughts and extreme weather which put 1 billion people at risk²², and

WHEREAS, action at the state and national level has been and continues to be inadequate, bold action by cities and counties has been shown to be effective, and is how we’re ultimately going to solve the climate crisis²³.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Island County, Washington:

Declares that a climate emergency threatens our county, region, state, nation, civilization, humanity, and the natural world, and

Intends to make permanent, structural changes in our county’s policies, regulations, and in the local economy that both drive greenhouse gas emissions to net zero as quickly as

¹⁷“How Feedback Loops Are Making The Climate Crisis Worse,” *The Climate Reality Project*, Jan 7, 2020.

<https://www.climaterealityproject.org/blog/how-feedback-loops-are-making-climate-crisis-worse>.

¹⁸Jeff Tollefson, “IPCC climate report: Earth is warmer than it’s been in 125,000 years,” *Nature*, Aug 9, 2021.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02179-1>.

¹⁹Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15>.

²⁰Dahr Jamail, “Sixth Mass Extinction Ushers In Record-Breaking Wildfires and Heat,” *Truthout*, Aug 20, 2018.

<https://truthout.org/articles/sixth-mass-extinction-ushers-in-record-breaking-wildfires-and-heat/>.

²¹“See what three degrees of global warming looks like,” Video Produced by *The Economist*, Oct 30, 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uynhvHZUOQo>.

²²IPCC, *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15>.

²³Hillary Rosner, “How State and Local Governments Are Leading the Way on Climate Policy,” *Audubon Magazine*, Fall 2019, <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/fall-2019/how-state-and-local-governments-are-leading-way>.

possible but also address climate crisis impacts already affecting our community while working toward a regenerative economy, and

The County will mail the complete text of this resolution, within one month of the date of the adopted resolution, to cities within Island County, nearby counties, and the State of Washington along with a strong call for immediate concurrent action, and

The County will approve the proposed update to the Climate Action Plan and follow its recommendation to hire a sustainability manager as a top priority. It will also commit to updating the Climate Action Plan every two years with community input, and

Charter a new, dedicated, climate action committee or advisory group within three months, and request existing committee(s) incorporate climate action into their charters and deliberations, and

Involve youth by reaching out into the community and local schools to invite youth participation in the new climate action committee in such a manner as involves youth in the deliberations and decision-making.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners Island County, Washington on April NUMBER, 2022.

Virginia Shaddy, Clerk of the Board ATTEST:

Janet St. Clair, Chair

Melanie Bacon, Member

Jill Johnson, Member