

CITY OF BUFFALO CLIMATE RESOLUTION:
DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, in April 2016 leaders from 175 countries recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement; and

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2018, the United Nations released a special report which projected that limiting warming to 1.5°C this century will require an unprecedented transformation of the global economy over the next 12 years; leaving only 10 years to make drastic policy changes to address the social, economic, racial, ecological, and political inequalities caused by climate change to prevent irreversible damage in the forms of famine, disease, economic tolls, and refugee crises; and

WHEREAS, on May 6, 2019 the Intergovernmental-Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) published a report *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* which states that the unprecedented decline of nature is endangering plants and animals that human food and life depends on. Over one million species are at risk of extinction, according to the report, with declines driven by land conversion, climate change, pollution, and invasive species; and

WHEREAS, it has been repeatedly proven that low income, indigenous, and black and brown communities are disproportionately impacted by the Climate Crisis and environmental hazards, an injustice that has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and higher death tolls in these communities; and

WHEREAS, in September 2019, the Western New York Youth Climate Council called for the declaration of a climate emergency in Buffalo and Erie County, and the passing of a Climate Resolution outlining a local, social, industrial, and economic mobilization of the resources and labor of the region on a massive scale to halt, reverse, mitigate, and prepare for the consequences of the climate emergency and to restore the climate for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America has disproportionately contributed to our current climate change with just over 4% of world's population and contributing nearly a third of excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, thus bears more responsibility to address the climate crisis; as evidenced by increased and intensifying extreme weather, rising temperatures, and loss of shorelines, including record breaking Lake Erie water levels in 2020; and

WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate requires an emergency mobilization to rapidly and safely transition away from fossil fuel dependency, and to implement measures to protect all people and species from the consequences of climate change; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor of the City of Buffalo has declared that the City of Buffalo will be a Climate Refuge, and has commissioned a Climate Smart Communities Initiative which has achieved Bronze Status in accordance with NYSERDA guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Executive of Erie County has declared that Erie County will be adhering to the Paris Climate Accords and has commissioned a Climate Smart Communities Initiative; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 New York State passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) which has set climate targets for the following:

- 85% Reduction in GHG Emissions by 2050
- 100% Carbon-free Electricity by 2040
- 70% Renewable Energy by 2030
- **35% or more of new clean energy investments targeted toward climate justice communities**
- 9,000 MW of Offshore Wind by 2035
- 3,000 MW of Energy Storage by 2030
- 6,000 MW of Solar by 2025
- 22 Million Tons of Carbon Reduction through Energy Efficiency and Electrification

NOW BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the City of Buffalo declares that a climate emergency threatens our city, county, state, nation, and world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City directs leaders at every level of government and in the private sector to commit to a climate emergency mobilization effort to reverse global warming and end greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City directs governmental leaders to commit to educating our residents about the climate emergency and the mobilization effort at the local, state, national, and global levels; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City will recognize the existing racial and economic disparities exacerbated by the climate crisis and work with community members and leaders to remediate these issues; by targeting City resources and remediation efforts

at the neighborhoods most impacted by the harms of climate change, with direct participation of neighborhood residents in decision making; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City will formulate a Green Development resolution to ensure all public and private developments, construction and demolitions are meeting the goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City will protect, preserve, and expand the City's ecological fabric and habitats and prepare a coastal resilience assessment for Lake Erie and the Niagara River to protect property and coastal environments to maintain high water quality and public access; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City will create an Office of Sustainability with at least one full-time staff member to plan and implement the City's climate response by developing strategies for climate change mitigation in the following categories, in cooperation with the applicable city department: waste management, stormwater management, food production, development and protection of green space, natural habitat preservation and restoration, clean energy production, fleet management, energy efficiency, transportation, and any other relevant category. Plans will be formulated with robust public input and will be made publicly available; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City underscores the need for full community participation, inclusion, and support, and recognizes that the residents of Erie County and members of community organizations, faith-based, youth, labor, business, academic institutions, and other such community allies will be integral to and provide leadership of the mobilization effort; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City of Buffalo Common Council will develop an ordinance to codify a timeline and outline a detailed budget for this Resolution to be executed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in furtherance of this resolution, the City of Buffalo Common Council shall submit a certified copy of this resolution to Congressman Brian Higgins, Assembly Majority Leader Crystal D. Peoples, Assembly member Sean Ryan, Senator Tim Kennedy, Governor Andrew Cuomo, County Executive Mark Poloncarz, and Erie County Legislatures and request that all relevant support and assistance in effectuating this resolution be provided.