



Climate Emergency Resolution Adopted June 27, 2022

Whereas, in August of 2021 the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its report on climate change stating that human activities have resulted in the world warming by more than one degree Celsius—nearly 2 degrees Fahrenheit—since 1850-1900¹;

Whereas, the report confirms what is already observable, that global warming is causing fiercer heat waves and droughts, sea level rise, longer fire seasons, heavier rainstorms, more violent hurricanes and cyclones, and that days with a large number of tornadoes (tornado clustering) have become more frequent;

Whereas, the UN Secretary General has characterized the report as “*code red for humanity*,”²

Whereas, the 2022 report of the IPCC, *Mitigation of Climate Change*, indicates that limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius is no longer plausible³;

Whereas, under the IPCC’s most optimistic scenario for the future of our planet, the earth’s carbon emissions must fall to net zero by 2050;

Whereas, on September 29, 2021 the US Fish and Wildlife Service⁴ declared 22 animals and one plant extinct, due in part to climate change, and it is clear that many more species will be adversely affected by loss of habitat caused by warmer temperatures, modified precipitation patterns, diminished snowpack, ocean acidification and other effects of climate change;

Whereas, climate change has a disproportionately adverse effect on youth and already disadvantaged communities - indigenous tribes, rural communities, coastal communities, workers, low-income households and people of color--who typically have fewer resources for adapting to climate change and are therefore the most vulnerable to displacement, adverse health

¹ IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [MassonDelmotte, V. ... et al.] <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

² “IPCC Report: “Code red” for human driven global heating, warns UN chief,” in *UN News: Global perspective Human stories*, 9 August 2021. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097362>

³ IPCC, 2022: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [P.R. Shukla ... et al.], p. 19 <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/>

⁴ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. *Proposed Delisting of 23 Species from the Endangered Species Act Due to Extinction*. September 29, 2021. <https://fws.gov/press-release/2021-09/us-fish-and-wildlife-service-proposes-delisting-23-species-endangered-species>

effects, job loss, property damage and other harmful effects of climate change⁵;

Whereas, climate change, pollution, environmental destruction and fossil fuel extraction and use will continue to intensify systemic racial, environmental and economic crises by disproportionately affecting indigenous communities, communities of color, migrant communities, the poor, women, young people, the elderly and people with disabilities;

Whereas, the United States has disproportionately contributed to the climate and ecological emergencies and thus bears an extraordinary responsibility to rapidly resolve these crises;

Whereas, restoring a safe and stable climate requires a “*climate mobilization*” at all levels of government on a scale not seen since World War II to reach *net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the next few decades*;

Whereas, scientists and experts from universities and institutions at the Great Lakes Region Environmental Law and Policy Center released *An Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change on the Great Lakes* in 2019 warning that global warming is already causing increased temperatures, heavier precipitation and flooding, coastal erosion, destruction of nearshore structures, extreme weather events, diminished agricultural production, increased risk for heat-related illness, respiratory diseases, and death from heat waves and summer air pollution events, exacerbated E. coli concentrations and toxic algal blooms in water bodies, diminishing drinking water sources, decreasing wildlife diversity and habit, and adversely affected lake levels, shipping, and shoreline use;

Whereas, the world’s leading climate scientists, including those in the Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments Center, predict that these and other serious effects of climate change will worsen if prompt action is not taken to curb emissions of greenhouse gasses;

Whereas, the State of Michigan’s Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy has developed the MI Healthy Climate Plan to provide guidance on how the State can reach its goals, to reduce GHG emissions 28% below 2005 levels by 2025 and 52% by 2030, to achieve economy-wide carbon neutrality by 2050, and to maintain net negative GHG emissions thereafter;

Whereas, Michigan’s weather, geography and natural resources make it likely that the state will be a destination for climate refugees⁶;

Whereas, the Kalamazoo County Commission and communities within the County including Kalamazoo City, Kalamazoo Township, Portage City, and Oshtemo Township, have already recognized climate crisis in our area, the importance of taking action to mitigate global climate change, and wish to promote local solutions and regional cooperation on the climate crisis issue⁷;

Whereas, a “just transition” must address past and ongoing harms by focusing on essential principles of justice, inclusion, material equity, and democracy during the transition to a net zero

⁵ EPA. 2021. Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the United States: A Focus on Six Impacts. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA 430-R-21-003. <https://www.epa.gov/cira/social-vulnerability-report>

⁶<https://www.michiganradio.org/environment-science/2021-02-16/water-could-make-michigan-a-climate-refuge-are-we-prepared>

⁷ <https://www.kalamazooecrisis.org/local-government-actions>

emissions, renewable energy economy and thriving ecology; and

Whereas, the City of Kalamazoo has created a Community Sustainability Plan and Kalamazoo Township has created a Climate Action Plan to prepare for limiting climate change impacts on a local level and Kalamazoo County has passed the first County wide millage to support affordable housing that supports environmental justice for disproportionately affected populations.

Therefore, be it hereby resolved that the Kalamazoo Area League of Women Voters

1. Declares that a climate emergency caused by human activities threatens our county, region, state, nation, civilization, humanity and the natural world.
2. Adopts as a priority advocating for (i) solutions to climate change that would limit global warming to no more than 1.8 degrees Celsius by 2040 to prevent the worst effects of climate change, and (ii) rectifying the disproportionately adverse effects of climate change for disadvantaged peoples worldwide, including indigenous communities, communities of color, migrant communities, the poor, women, youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities and (iii) expanding social infrastructure to adequately meet the changing needs of the population, including displaced people and migrants.
3. Urges other local Michigan Leagues to create and implement Climate Action Plans by adopting similar resolutions and advocating for local governments to adopt ‘Climate Emergency Declarations’ and commit to urgent action to reduce net carbon emissions to zero;
4. Commits to (i) educating our League members and the public about our climate emergency, (ii) advocating for legislation and administrative actions that will integrate climate risk considerations into decision making to codify and quickly advance climate mobilization efforts in the Kalamazoo Area and in Michigan; and
5. Joins the *League of Women Voters of Michigan and the League of Women Voters of the United States* in advocating for urgent action by international, federal, state, county, and local governments to reduce net carbon emissions to zero. We support using the most immediate, effective and equitable solutions recommended in the *IPCC’s 2022 Mitigation of Climate Change* report including a price on carbon, energy efficient buildings and transportation, a transition to renewable energy, adaptation strategies. To reach the goal of no more than 1.8 degrees Celsius of warming, we acknowledge the importance of inventing and implementing new technologies as they become plausible.

This Climate Emergency Resolution was considered at the LWVKA June 27, 2022 Board Meeting and was adopted by unanimous vote by the Board of Directors.

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Co-President

Barbara Dircks, Co-President