

DRAFT RESOLUTION; RESOLUTION NO:

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF _____ TO THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY IN SUPPORT OF REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION UNDER THE CLEAN AIR ACT

WHEREAS, the decade from 2000 to 2010 was the warmest on record¹, 2005 and 2010 tied for the hottest years on record²; and 2012 was the hottest year on record for the contiguous U.S.³; and

WHEREAS, the current level of CO₂ in the atmosphere is approximately 397 parts per million⁴ (ppm); and

WHEREAS, one of the world's leading climate scientists, Dr. James Hansen, stated in 2008: "If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted, paleoclimate evidence and climate change suggest that CO₂ will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm⁵; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency determined that current and future greenhouse gas concentrations endanger public health⁶, and according to the Global Humanitarian Forum climate change is already responsible every year for some 300,000 deaths, 325 million people seriously affected, and economic losses worldwide of U.S. \$125 billion⁷; and

WHEREAS, extreme weather events, most notably heat waves and precipitation extremes, are striking with increased frequency⁸, with deadly consequences for people and wildlife; in the United States in 2011 alone, a record 14 weather and climate disasters occurred, including droughts, heat waves, and floods, that cost at least \$1 billion each in damages and loss of human lives⁹; and

WHEREAS, climate change creates conditions that lead to more destructive storms like 2012's Superstorm Sandy¹⁰, by loading storms with more energy and more rainfall¹¹, raising sea levels and causing storm surge to ride on a higher sea surface so that more coastline floods¹², and warming the Arctic and melting sea ice, which causes changes in the jet stream that are bringing more extreme weather to the U.S.¹³; and

WHEREAS, climate change is affecting food security by reducing the growth and yields of important crops¹⁴; droughts, floods and changes in snowpack are altering water supplies¹⁵; as of October 2, 2012, 64.6 percent of the contiguous U.S. was experiencing moderate-to-exceptional drought¹⁶; and in 2012, the U.S. Department of Agriculture designated more than half (50.3 percent) of all U.S. counties disaster areas, mainly due to drought¹⁷; and

WHEREAS, scientists have concluded that by 2100 as many as one in 10 species may be on the verge of extinction due to climate change¹⁸; and

WHEREAS, the world's land-based ice is rapidly melting, threatening water supplies in many regions and raising sea levels¹⁹, and Arctic summer sea ice extent has decreased to about half what it was several decades ago²⁰, and reached a record low in 2012²¹, with an accompanying drastic reduction in sea-ice thickness and volume²², which is severely jeopardizing ice-dependent animals²³; and

WHEREAS, global sea level is rising 60 percent faster than projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change²⁴; the U.S. East Coast is a hotspot for sea level rise with rates three to four times faster

than the global average²⁵; sea level rise is accelerating in pace²⁶; and sea level could rise by one to two meters in this century, threatening millions of Americans with severe flooding²⁷; and

WHEREAS, for four decades, the Clean Air Act has protected the air we breathe through a proven, comprehensive, successful system of pollution control that saves lives and creates economic benefits exceeding its costs by many times²⁸; and

WHEREAS, with the Clean Air Act, air quality in this country has improved significantly since 1970, despite major growth both in our economy and industrial production; and

WHEREAS, between 1970 and 1990, the six main pollutants covered by the Clean Air Act — particulate matter and ground-level ozone (both of which contribute to smog and asthma), carbon monoxide, lead, sulfur and nitrogen oxides (the pollutants that cause acid rain) — were reduced by between 47 percent and 93 percent, and airborne lead was virtually eliminated; and

WHEREAS, the Clean Air Act has produced economic benefits valued at \$2 trillion or 30 times the cost of regulation; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Massachusetts vs. EPA* (2007) that greenhouse gases are “air pollutants” as defined by the Clean Air Act and the Environmental Protection Agency has the authority to regulate them; and

WHEREAS, The city of _____ prides itself on being a leader in the fight against climate change and for clean air [*insert steps your city has already taken such as developing a climate action plan, signing the Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement, reducing carbon emissions by X percent, etc.*]

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that climate change is not an abstract problem for the future or one that will only affect far-distant places but rather climate change is happening now, we are causing it, and the longer we wait to act, the more we lose and the more difficult the problem will be to solve; and we, the _____ City Council, on behalf of the residents of _____, do hereby urge the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and President Barack Obama to move swiftly to fully employ and enforce the Clean Air Act to do our part to reduce carbon in our atmosphere to no more than 350 parts per million.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk shall forward a copy of this resolution To the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and President Barack Obama.

ENDNOTES

¹ Press Release, National Aeronautic Space Association, *NASA Research Finds Last Decade was Warmest on Record, 2009 One of the Warmest Years* (Jan. 21, 2010), www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2010/jan/HQ_10-017_Warmest_temps.html.

² National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *NOAA: 2010 Tied for Warmest Year on Record*, www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2011/20110112_globalstats.html (last visited on 3/30/12).

³ <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/national/2012/13>.

⁴ <http://co2now.org/Current-CO2/CO2-Now/> (last visited on 5/14/2013); Earth System Research Laboratory of NOAA, *Trends in Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide*, www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/ (last visited on 5/14/2013).

⁵ J. Hansen et al., *Target atmospheric CO₂: Where should humanity aim?*, *Open Atmos. Sci.* 2, 217 (2008), <http://pubs.giss.nasa.gov/abs/ha00410c.html>.

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- ⁶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act*, 74 Federal Register 66496-66546 (Dec. 15, 2009) (to be codified at 40 C.F.R. ch. 1), <http://epa.gov/climatechange/endangerment.html> (last visited 4/2/12).
- ⁷ Global Humanitarian Forum, *The Anatomy of a Silent Crisis* (2009), www.eird.org/publicaciones/humanimpactreport.pdf, p.1 of pdf.
- ⁸ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX)* (2012), <http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/>; U.S. Global Change Research Program, *Global Climate Change Impacts in the US: Global Climate Change* (2009), <http://www.globalchange.gov/publications/reports/scientific-assessments/us-impacts/full-report/global-climate-change>; D. Coumou and S. Rahmstorf, *A decade of weather extremes*, *Nature Climate Change* (2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/NCLIMATE1452>.
- ⁹ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *Extreme Weather 2011*, <http://www.noaa.gov/extreme2011/> (last visited April 2, 2012); Press Release, World Meteorological Organization, *2011: world's 10th warmest year, warmest year with La Niña on record, second-lowest Arctic sea ice extent* (2012), www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/press_releases/gcs_2011_en.html.
- ¹⁰ <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/sandy-to-cost-new-york-42-billion-2012-11-26>.
- ¹¹ <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/10/10/1209542109.abstract>.
- ¹² http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=3256&from=rss_home#.UJBC22eHPAU.
- ¹³ <http://www.agu.org/pubs/crossref/2012/2012GL051000.shtml>; <http://www.pnas.org/content/109/11/4074>.
- ¹⁴ D.B. Lobell et al., *Climate Trends and Global Crop Production Since 1980*, *Science* 333, 616 (July 29, 2011), www.sciencemag.org/content/early/2011/05/04/science.1204531.abstract; U.S. Global Change Research Program, *Global Climate Change Impacts in the US: Agriculture* (2009), www.globalchange.gov/publications/reports/scientific-assessments/us-impacts/full-report/climate-change-impacts-by-sector/agriculture.
- ¹⁵ U.S. Global Change Research Program, *Global Climate Change Impacts in the US: Water Resources* (2009), www.globalchange.gov/publications/reports/scientific-assessments/us-impacts/full-report/climate-change-impacts-by-sector/water-resources.
- ¹⁶ October 2, 2012 U.S. Drought Monitor; <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/national/2012/9>.
- ¹⁷ <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2012/08/0260.xml>.
- ¹⁸ I.M.D. Maclean and R.J. Wilson, *Recent ecological responses to climate change support predictions of high extinction risk*, *PNAS* 108, 12337 (2011), <http://www.pnas.org/content/108/30/12337>, summary at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/07/11071110711151457.htm>.
- ¹⁹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report* (2007), http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_synthesis_report.htm, pp. 30, 49 of pdf.
- ²⁰ J. Stroeve et al., *Arctic Sea Ice Extent Plummet in 2007*, *EOS* 89, 2 (January 8, 2008), <http://www.agu.org/pubs/crossref/2008/2008EO020001.shtml>, p. 13 of pdf.
- ²¹ <http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/2012/09/arctic-sea-ice-extent-settles-at-record-seasonal-minimum/>.
- ²² Polar Science Center, *Arctic Sea Ice Volume Anomaly, version 2*, <http://psc.apl.washington.edu/wordpress/research/projects/arctic-sea-ice-volume-anomaly/> (last visited April 3, 2012); R. Kwok and D.A. Rothrock, *Decline in Arctic sea ice thickness from submarine and ICES at records: 1958-2008*, *Geophysical Research Letters* 36, L15501 (2009), <http://www.agu.org/pubs/crossref/2009/2009GL039035.shtml>.
- ²³ Center for Biological Diversity and Care for the Wild International, *Extinction: It's Not Just for Polar Bears* (2010), http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/climate_law_institute/the_arctic_meltdown/arctic_extinction_report.html.
- ²⁴ <http://iopscience.iop.org/1748-9326/7/4/044035/article>.
- ²⁵ http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=3256&from=rss_home#.ULZ_yGeHMmR
- ²⁶ M.A. Merrifield et al., *An Anomalous Recent Acceleration of Global Sea Level Rise*, *Journal of Climate* 22, 5772 (2008), <http://journals.ametsoc.org/doi/abs/10.1175/2009JCLI2985.1>.
- ²⁷ B.H. Strauss, *Tidally adjusted estimates of topographic vulnerability to sea level rise and flooding for the contiguous United States*, *Environmental Research Letters* 7 (2012), <http://iopscience.iop.org/1748-9326/7/1/014033>, summary at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/03/120314111738.htm>; <http://dels.nas.edu/Report/Level-Rise-Coasts/13389>.
- ²⁸ For Clean Air Act facts, see Center for Biological Diversity, *The Clean Air Act Works* (2011), http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/climate_law_institute/global_warming_litigation/clean_air_act/pdfs/CleanAirActWorks_032011.pdf; and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *The Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act, 1970 to 1990* (1997), <http://www.epa.gov/air/sect812/>; and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *The Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act, 1990 to 2010* (1999), <http://www.epa.gov/air/sect812/>.