

## RESOLUTION NO. 69-18

### RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND, DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

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**WHEREAS**, human activities have warmed the Earth to a point that threatens climate stability and the modern way of life, and in December 2015 196 nations signed the Paris Climate Accord under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to address this threat by limiting destabilizing activities<sup>i</sup>; however a failure to implement these plans has resulted in an increase in global temperature<sup>ii</sup> that at the current rate will exceed the goal set by the Paris Climate Accord by 2026<sup>iii</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, over 19,000 scientists have signed a “Second Warning to Humanity” calling for a drastic change in how ecological resources are managed, and global leaders have declared that humanity is on the verge of a "global catastrophe" and called for drastic changes to the ecological economy<sup>iv</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change has already set in motion catastrophic changes to the Earth system including accelerating ice mass loss that will result in sea-level rise, fresh water scarcity, the extinction of species, billions of climate refugees, the disappearance of island nations, and "certain death" for Africa<sup>v</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change has been called a “threat multiplier” that exacerbates pre-existing tensions and political instability in regions across the world<sup>vi</sup>; and climate-fueled droughts, famines, and diseases have already resulted in the death or displacement of millions of people<sup>vii</sup>, and the increasing severity of storms and climate events instigated by climate change represents a devastating burden to the global economy and the economy of the United States<sup>viii</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, common sense and morality indicate that humanity can no longer safely emit greenhouse gases and must demand an emergency mobilization effort to reach zero emissions across all sectors, to rapidly and safely remove excess carbon from the atmosphere, to preserve and restore the Earth's biodiversity, to implement safety measures to protect all people and species from the consequences of abrupt warming in the near-term, and to cultivate a shift toward climate-resiliency, prioritizing conservation, community, and independence from fossil fuels; and

**WHEREAS**, indigenous communities, low-income communities, and communities of color have suffered the gravest consequences of climate change<sup>ix</sup>, and justice requires that those countries, classes, and industries that have contributed the most to this global crisis carry a commensurate burden in reversing it and protecting those most impacted, including the active consultation and protection of vulnerable and historically exploited population in the development and implementation of these efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States of America has disproportionately contributed to climate change and to preventing a transition away from fossil fuels<sup>x</sup>, and Americans thus bear an extraordinary responsibility in combatting climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change has already resulted in immediate danger to California and Bay Area communities through severe storms, lasting droughts, and increased wildfires<sup>xi</sup>, and we cannot wait for more devastating floods, heat waves, fires, droughts, rising sea levels, and public health and humanitarian crises that threaten our community before beginning the necessary emergency response; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Richmond has often contributed to this crisis and was slow to hearing the voices of those in the Richmond community suffering under environmental injustice, and thus bears a substantial moral and practical responsibility to continue to curtail the use of fossil fuels and support an equitable transition to a stable climate; and

**WHEREAS**, as outlined in the Richmond Climate Action Plan it is the goal of the City of Richmond to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create green jobs, and prepare for the impacts of climate change on public health, infrastructure, the economy, ecosystems, and public spaces in our community, and Richmond has repeatedly upheld this mission through resolutions to protect

the environment and divest from extractive industries; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Richmond strives to be a leader in combatting climate change, and it is the firm belief of the City Council that the Richmond community and surrounding counties have the insight, drive, capacity and capital to work for environmental justice, and that when we work together across social and city borders we can build transformative networks to combat climate change.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Council of the City of Richmond declares that we face a Climate Emergency that threatens our city, region, state, nation, civilization, humanity and the natural world; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the City of Richmond calls for a Regional Just Transition and Climate Emergency Mobilization Collaborative Effort, inviting all leaders, agencies, and organizations in our regional community to initiate a climate emergency mobilization effort to restore a safe climate; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the City of Richmond calls for an emergency mobilization effort to end citywide greenhouse gas emissions, educate residents about climate change, and work to advocate for a mass mobilization at the local, state, national, and global levels; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the City of Richmond commits to keeping the considerations of disadvantaged communities central to all climate emergency mobilization planning processes, and to inviting and encouraging these communities to directly advocate for their specific needs and equity in the environmental justice process; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the City of Richmond recognizes community environmental justice, economic justice, and racial justice organizations and activists as partners in the Regional Just Transition and Climate Emergency Mobilization Collaborative Effort, and will consult with them at every step of the mobilization process to ensure that efforts are centered in equity and respect for all community members; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the City of Richmond calls on the State of California and the United States as a whole to initiate an emergency mobilization effort to mitigate climate change, end greenhouse gas emissions, and immediately initiate an effort to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere.

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I certify that the foregoing resolution was passed and adopted by the Council of the City of Richmond at a regular meeting thereof held July 24, 2018, by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Beckles, Choi, Martinez, Myrick,  
Recinos, Vice Mayor Willis, and Mayor Butt.

NOES: None.

ABSTENTIONS: None.

ABSENT: None.

PAMELA CHRISTIAN  
CLERK OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND  
(SEAL)

Approved:  
TOM BUTT  
Mayor

Approved as to form:  
BRUCE GOODMILLER  
City Attorney

State of California }  
County of Contra Costa } : ss.  
City of Richmond }



I certify that the foregoing is a true copy of **Resolution No. 69-18**, finally passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Richmond at a regular meeting held on July 24, 2018.

*Pamela Christian*  
Pamela Christian, Clerk of the City of Richmond

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<sup>i</sup> United Nations. (2015). *Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. United Nations.

<sup>ii</sup> Hansen, James, et al., Global Temperature in 2017 (18 January 2018).

<sup>iii</sup> See, *inter alia*, Henley, B. J., and A. D. King (2017), *Trajectories toward the 1.5°C Paris target: Modulation by the Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation*, *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 44, 4256--4262, doi: 10.1002/2017GL073480; Jacob, D. , Kotova, L. , Teichmann, C. , Sobolowski, S. P., Vautard, R. , Donnelly, C., Koutroulis, A.G., Grillakis, M. G., Tsanis, I. K., Damm, A., Sakalli, A. and van Vliet, M. T. (2018), *Climate Impacts in Europe Under +1.5°C Global Warming*. *Earth's Future*, 6: 264-285. doi:10.1002/2017EF000710

<sup>iv</sup> William J. Ripple, Christopher Wolf, Thomas M. Newsome, Mauro Galetti, Mohammed Alamgir, Eileen Crist, Mahmoud I. Mahmoud, William F. Laurance, 15,364 scientist signatories from 184 countries; World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice, *BioScience*, Volume 67, Issue 12, 1 December 2017, Pages 1026–1028, <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix125>

<sup>v</sup> William J. Ripple, Christopher Wolf, Thomas M. Newsome, Mauro Galetti, Mohammed Alamgir, Eileen Crist, Mahmoud I. Mahmoud, William F. Laurance, 15,364 scientist signatories from 184 countries; World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice, *BioScience*, Volume 67, Issue 12, 1 December 2017, Pages 1026–1028, <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix125>; Sheppard, K. (2009, December 9). Poor Countries Reject “Suicide Pact”. *Mother Jones*. Retrieved from <https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2009/12/poor-countries-g77-suicide-pact-copenhagen/>

<sup>vi</sup> Bryan, J. (2017, November 16). Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier. *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/climate-change-as-a-threat-multiplier>

<sup>vii</sup> Shah Azhar, G. (2017, December 18). Climate change will displace millions in coming decades. Nations should prepare now to help them. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/climate-change-will-displace-millions-in-coming-decades-nations-should-prepare-now-to-help-them-89274>

<sup>viii</sup> NOAA NCEI U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters (2018).

<sup>ix</sup> Environmental and Climate Justice. (n.d.). *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*. Retrieved from <https://www.naacp.org/issues/environmental-justice/>

<sup>x</sup> Gillis, J., & Popovich, N. (2017, June 1). The U.S. Is the Biggest Carbon Polluter in History. It Just Walked Away From the Paris Climate Deal. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/01/climate/us-biggest-carbon-polluter-in-history-will-it-walk-away-from-the-paris-climate-deal.html>

<sup>xi</sup> Howard, B. C. (2014, August 12). 5 Key Threats to California From Climate Change. *The National Geographic*. Retrieved from <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/08/140812-california-climate-change-global-warming-science/>