



Proclamation

Supporting a state goal of 100% clean energy by 2050 and the creation of green jobs

WHEREAS, climate change has increased the global average surface temperature by 1.00 degrees Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) since 1880; and

WHEREAS, climate change is expected to increasingly impact North Carolina's temperatures, precipitation and sea level with harmful consequences in coming years; and

WHEREAS, climate change and global average temperature increases are primarily due to human-caused fossil fuels emissions, including coal, oil and natural gas, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, National Academy of Sciences, American Meteorological Society, United State Environmental Protection Agency, United State Department of Defense and numerous other leading scientific, academic and governmental authorities both in the United States and internationally; and

WHEREAS, a final agreement of the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP21), which included the United States and a total of 195 nations, was reached in Paris, France on December 12, 2015, that states the aim is to "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels" and entered into force on November 4, 2016; and

WHEREAS, scientist have concluded the concentration of carbon dioxide, the leading greenhouse gas, in the Earth's atmosphere is currently and consistently over 400 parts per millions (ppm) and will likely stay above this level for the indefinite future for the first time in millions of years; and

WHEREAS, sixteen of the seventeen hottest years on record have occurred in the twenty-first century and 2016 is the hottest year on record; and

WHEREAS, an increase in the global average temperature is having and will continue to increasingly have major adverse impacts, if not stopped by eliminating the use of fossil fuels, on both the natural and human-made environments due to longer, more intense heat waves, prolonged droughts, spread of infectious diseases, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, wildfires and more intense and frequent extreme weather events; and

WHEREAS, these physical effects are expected to lead to water scarcity, food insecurity, increasing numbers of refugees, increased poverty and the mass extinction of species; and

WHEREAS, studies completed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Risky Business Project, Duke University and others point to the severe economic costs of climate change and continuing use of fossil fuel, estimating billions of dollars a year in costs nationally and trillions globally; and

WHEREAS, leading economists, policy experts and business leaders conclude that transitioning to a clean energy economy available for all would create millions of green jobs nationally, improve health and living standards and boost economic growth in coming years; and

WHEREAS, a study cited two of the twenty dirtiest coal plants in the country are in North Carolina, the Belews Creek plant and the Roxboro Steam Plant; and

WHEREAS, low-income communities and communities of color in North Carolina and the United States are inordinately exposed to pollution, that causes serious health problems such as cancer and asthma, from fossil fuels, including the dirtiest coal-fired power plants, which produce coal ash and need to be empowered and have access to educational tools and an awareness of climate issues; and

WHEREAS, a Stanford University and University of California-Berkeley study concludes the United States energy supply could be based entirely on renewable energy by the year 2050 using current technologies and 80% renewable energy by 2030, while creating numerous green jobs; and

WHEREAS, municipalities, organizations, businesses and academic institutions throughout the world have set a goal to achieve carbon or climate neutrality by 2050 or earlier; and

WHEREAS, over 1,000 mayors have joined the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement since 2005 to commit to significantly reduce carbon emissions in their cities to combat climate change; and

WHEREAS, over 600 American colleges and universities have made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gases, including Appalachian State University, Blue Ridge Community College, Carteret Community College, Catawba College, Central Carolina Community College, Davidson College, Duke University, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Guilford College, North Carolina Central University, Queen's University of Charlotte, Southeastern Community College, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Wake Technical College and Warren Wilson College; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina installed 1,140 MW of solar electric capacity in 2015, ranking it second nationally; nearly \$1.7 billion was invested on solar installations in North Carolina, a 159% increase over the previous year; there are currently more than 200 solar companies at work throughout the value chain in North Carolina, the state companies employing some 6,000 people; North Carolina ranks third in the nation in installed solar capacity, enough to power 260,000 homes; and solar photovoltaic system prices in the U.S. have dropped by 66% since 2010; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina has more offshore wind energy potential than any other Atlantic state; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report recommended a global goal of achieving near zero greenhouse gas emissions or below, which is necessary to stabilize the global average temperature to avoid climate catastrophe.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners proclaims that it endorses the following:

The State of North Carolina and the United States shall establish a transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to a 100% clean renewable energy for all energy sectors-based economy, by January 1, 2050 or sooner to avoid climate catastrophe, to promote job creation and economic growth and to protect the Earth for current and future generations from climate catastrophe.

This 17th day of April, 2017.

Attest:

By:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman