

RESOLUTION NO. 23-206

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO PROCLAIMING THE EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE

WHEREAS, the March 20, 2023, special report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected that an increase in global temperatures of more than 1.5° Celsius (2.7° Fahrenheit) in the near-term is likely, and regional effects are likely to be unavoidable, abrupt, and irreversible, and that adaptation options that are feasible and effective today will become constrained and less effective with increasing global warming; and

WHEREAS, the March 20, 2023, IPCC report finds that climate change has caused substantial damages, and increasingly irreversible losses in terrestrial, freshwater, cryospheric, and coastal and open ocean ecosystems, reduced food security and affected water security, cause increases in extreme heat events that have resulted in human mortality and morbidity, increased the occurrence of climate-related food-borne and water-borne diseases and the incidence of vector-borne diseases; and

WHEREAS, on September 10, 2018, the State of California's Governor Brown issued an executive order establishing a 2045 statewide target to achieve carbon neutrality, and on the same day, Senate Bill 100 was passed, which sets a 100% clean electricity goal for the State by 2045; and

WHEREAS, on September 3, 2021, the State of California Energy Commission, Public Utilities Commission and Air Resources Board issued a Joint Agency Report Summary regarding implementation of SB 100 which found, in part, that solar and wind power construction rates need to nearly triple in order to meet the 2045 statewide target; and

WHEREAS, California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment warned that extreme weather and climate-related events in the United States are worsening, predicting increased drought cycles and heat waves in the western U.S. with a resulting three-fold increase in intensity and magnitude of wildfires, declined water supply and snow pack, increased flooding, impacted agriculture, as well as substantial damages to the U.S. economy and human health, unless greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are curbed; and

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopted a new Safety Element for the County, which includes an assessment of the County's vulnerability to climate change. The Climate Adaptation Vulnerability Assessment identified seventy-five (75) populations and assets in Mendocino County that are highly or severely vulnerable to one or more hazard conditions due to climate change, with wildfire and smoke being responsible for most vulnerability scores, followed by inland flooding and landslides; and

WHEREAS, on August 9, 2023, the California Coastal Commission adopted Sustainability Principles: A Framework for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Coastal Zone, which acknowledged that rising greenhouse gas emissions is driving climate change, which will affect coastal environments in many ways, including rising sea levels, ocean acidification, changing precipitation and temperature patterns, increased wildfire risks, extended periods of drought and limited water supplies and loss of or changes in species diversity and distribution, and which provides principles to improve climate resiliency and minimize the effects of climate change throughout the Coastal Zone, including supporting renewable energy projects; and

WHEREAS, on November 14, 2023, the United States Global Change Research Program delivered its Fifth National Climate Assessment pursuant to the Global Change Research Act of 1990, and identified the following broad current and future climate risks to the United States: safe, reliable water supplies are threatened by flooding, drought, and sea level rise; disruptions to food systems are expected to increase; homes and property are at risk from sea level rise and more intense extreme events, infrastructure and services are increasingly damaged and disrupted by extreme weather and sea level rise; climate change exacerbates existing health challenges and creates new ones; and climate change is causing ecosystems to undergo transformational changes; and,

WHEREAS, Mendocino County has been profoundly affected by multiple natural disasters in recent years due to climate change including severe drought, heatwaves, devastating wildfires and accompanying days long power outages, extreme weather such as severe rain, snow and wind storms, flooding, landslides, coastal sea rise with severe impacts on coastal near shore ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, the Redwood Complex Fire in 2017, the Hopkins Fire in 2021, the Winter Weather Flood Event of 2022-2023 and the February Snow Event of 2023 have been classified as climate related disasters and the Disaster Recovery division of the Executive Office estimates that the County has spent over \$11,700,000 in emergency response costs responding to these disasters; and

WHEREAS, disasters resulting from climate change affect both public and private infrastructure, threatening harm to roads, power and communication lines, businesses and residences, agricultural productivity, the health of our natural resources, and our community's mental health; and

WHEREAS, the disasters resulting from climate change not only cause loss of life and property damage, but are also have economic consequences, such as increased insurance costs and even a reduction in the number of insurance agencies willing to offer policies in certain states like California and Florida; and

WHEREAS, the current pace and scale of state and national climate action is not sufficient to avert substantial damage to the economy, environment, and human health over the coming decades; and

WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate requires an emergency mobilization to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, to rapidly and safely draw down or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and to implement measures to protect all people and species; and

WHEREAS, in order to avoid irreversible, catastrophic climate change impacts, the County must focus not only on reducing its emissions but must also take action to enable its residents to prepare for significant ecological and economic impacts due to climate change; and

WHEREAS, certain existing policies and regulations of the County may hinder rapid and effective response to climate change, and urgency actions to ease regulatory and public policy constraints may be necessary to facilitate effective and expedited implementation of climate change mitigation efforts, including streamlining the implementation of climate change mitigation measures such as renewable energy projects, green infrastructure and emissions reductions initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the severity and urgency of the climate change crisis necessitates swift and urgent action to protect the County's residents, environment, and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the County of Mendocino must do everything in its power to encourage a swift transition to a low-carbon economy to mitigate economic risks and capture emerging opportunities in renewable energy and sustainable technologies, and to move towards an ecologically, socially, and financially sustainable economy; and

WHEREAS, Government Code section 8558 provides that a local emergency means the duly proclaimed existence of conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of a county, city and county, or city, caused by conditions such as air pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, drought, cyberterrorism, sudden and severe energy shortage, deenergization event, electromagnetic pulse attack, plant or animal infestation or disease, the Governor's warning of an earthquake or volcanic prediction, or an earthquake, or other conditions, other than conditions resulting from a labor controversy, which are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of that political subdivision and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat, or with respect to regulated energy utilities, a sudden and severe energy shortage or deenergization event that requires extraordinary measures beyond the authority vested in the Public Utilities Commission; and

WHEREAS, Government Code section 8630 provides that a local emergency may be proclaimed by the governing body of a county.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of Mendocino County as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein by this reference.
2. As a consequence of climate change, conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen in Mendocino County such that pursuant to Government Code section 8630 a local emergency now exists throughout Mendocino County as a result of climate change.
3. During this local emergency the powers, functions and duties of the Mendocino County Chief Executive Officer and the emergency organization of Mendocino County shall be those prescribed by State law, and the ordinances, resolutions and approved emergency services plans of the County of Mendocino.
4. This resolution shall be submitted to the Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services requesting a Director's Concurrence and to the Governor requesting a State declaration of emergency due to the given impacts as well as making California Disaster Assistance and all applicable state funding and resources available to the County.
5. Pursuant to Government Code section 8634, the Board of Supervisors, or officials designated by the Board of Supervisors, may promulgate orders and regulations necessary to provide for the protection of life and property.

The foregoing Resolution introduced by Supervisor Williams, seconded by Supervisor Mulheren, and carried this 19th day of December, 2023, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors McGourty, Mulheren, Haschak, Gjerde, and Williams
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

WHEREUPON, the Chair declared said Resolution adopted and SO ORDERED.

ATTEST: DARCIE ANTLE
Clerk of the Board

GLENN MCGOURTY, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Deputy

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code Section 25103, delivery of this document has been made.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
CHRISTIAN M. CURTIS
County Counsel

BY: DARCIE ANTLE
Clerk of the Board

Deputy