

**ELGIN CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION  
DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND MOBILIZATION  
TO RESTORE A SAFE CLIMATE**

In 2011, members of the Elgin City Council established the Elgin Sustainability Commission to oversee implementation of the city's Sustainability Action Plan. That plan addresses many areas relevant to our current Climate Emergency, including alternative energy, green building technologies, green infrastructure, healthy living, recycling and waste management, transportation and mobility, urban design and water resources.

In 2016, leaders from around the world including the USA signed the 2016 Paris Accord. This was also publicly acknowledged and affirmed by Elgin Mayor David Kaptain in 2017 who was cognizant of the seriousness and importance of this Accord. Christiana Figueres, the leader of the 2016 Paris Accord made the following statement: "The decade we have just started is the most consequential decade humanity has ever faced. If we are not able to cut our current global greenhouse-gas emissions by fifty per cent over the next ten years, we will be poised to enter into a world of constant destruction of infrastructure, congested and polluted cities, rampant diseases, increasing burning and flooding, mass migrations due to extensive droughts, heat or land loss leading to the abandonment of uninhabitable areas, and political turmoil as people fight for food, water, and land. At the current level of emissions, that is the world that we are heading for. If, on the other hand, we set our minds and determination to the necessary transformation, reducing our global greenhouse gases [by] half over the next ten years, we would have actually co-created a path toward a very different world: a reforested planet with regenerated agriculture, clean and efficient transport, enjoyable cities, clean air, and ubiquitous cheap energy for everyone."

The following Climate Emergency declaration reflects the Elgin City Council's awareness of the urgent need for timely implementation of measures to address the problems and mitigate the disastrous effects, both present and future, of climate change.

The Elgin City Council finds the following:

(a) A Climate Emergency exists that threatens the City of Elgin, the State of Illinois, the nation, humanity and the natural world.

(b) In April, 2016 world leaders recognized the urgent need to combat climate change by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep global warming, "well below 2 degrees Celcius above pre-industrial levels" and to "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celcius."

(c) In 2017, the Mayor of Elgin, David Kaptain, signed a letter stating that the mayor, along with 220 other US mayors, will uphold the terms of the Paris Climate Accords in order to "build and strengthen relationships around the world to protect the planet from devastating climate risks."

(d) In October 2018 the United Nations released a special report which projected that limiting warming to even the dangerous 1.5 degrees Celcius target this century will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector on the global economy by 2030.

(e) In July 2019, members of the United States Congress introduced a concurrent Congressional resolution to declare a national Climate Emergency in the United States, calling for a "national, social, industrial and economic mobilization of the resources and labor of the United States at a massive scale to halt, reverse, mitigate and prepare for the consequences of the climate emergency and to restore the climate for future generations[.]"

(f) The suffering, death and destruction already wrought by current average global warming of 1 degree Celcius demonstrate that the Earth is already too hot for safety and justice, as attested by increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, rising seas, diseases, droughts and extreme weather.

(g) Climate change and the global economy's expansion beyond ecological limits are driving the Sixth Mass Extinction of species, causing a 60% decline in global wildlife populations since 1970.

(h) According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, 1.5 degrees Centigrade of global warming could expose 500 million people to water poverty [and] 36 million to food insecurity because of lower crop yields and 4.5 billion people to heat waves.

(i) Climate change will continue to make basic human necessities such as food, housing, health care, transportation and energy more expensive and difficult to obtain.

(j) Marginalized populations in cities like Elgin, the State of Illinois, the nation and worldwide, including people of color, immigrants, indigenous communities, low-income individuals and people with disabilities are already disproportionately affected by climate change and will continue to bear an excess burden as temperatures increase.

(k) The United States of America, through in large part its historic use of carbon-producing fossil fuels, has disproportionately contributed to the climate and

ecological emergencies and thus bears an extraordinary responsibility to rapidly address and solve these crises.

(l) Reversing biodiversity loss and restoring a safe and stable climate requires a Climate Mobilization, an emergency mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II, in order to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors of the economy; to rapidly and safely drawdown and remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere at emergency, wartime speed, and until safe, pre-industrial climate conditions are restored; and to implement measures to protect all people and species from the consequences of abrupt climate breakdown.

(m) Such necessary measures to restore a safe climate include:

- (1) A rapid, just managed phase-out of fossil fuels.
- (2) Ending greenhouse emissions to establish a zero-emissions economy within ten years or less.
- (3) A widespread effort to safely drawdown excess carbon from the atmosphere.
- (4) A full transition to a regenerative agriculture system.
- (5) An end to the Sixth Mass Extinction through widespread conservation of ecosystems.

(n) Building a society that is resilient to the current, expected and potential effects of climate change will protect health, lives, environments and economies. Resilience is best achieved by preparing for the most dramatic potential consequences of climate change.

(o) Justice demands climate policy that addresses the specific experiences, vulnerabilities and needs of the marginalized communities most affected by the effects of climate change and includes those communities as active participants in climate and ecological resilience planning, policy and actions.

(p) The massive scope and scale of action necessary to stabilize the climate and biosphere will require unprecedented levels of public awareness, engagement and deliberation to develop and implement effective, just and equitable policies to address the climate emergency.

(q) The City of Elgin, like the State of Illinois and the Midwest region, generally, already have endured the negative effects of climate change, such as extreme flooding and unseasonal severe weather. Such recurring atypical conditions will endanger food supplies, raise the cost of heat and fuel, increase poverty and homelessness, and exacerbate incidents of disease and health problems.

(r) The City of Elgin should act as a global leader by initiating an Emergency Climate Mobilization and taking the steps necessary to convert our city to an ecologically, socially, and economically regenerative local economy at an appropriate emergency speed, while advocating and supporting regional, national and international efforts to reverse global warming and the ecological crisis.

In view thereof, the Elgin City Council declares a state of Climate Emergency that threatens the health and well-being of Elgin, its inhabitants and its environment. It is therefore resolved that:

(a) The City Council will work with the Mayor's office and city departments to develop policies and a budget that promote urgent climate action. Such actions include:

(1) Commitment to a citywide mobilization effort to reverse global warming and the ecological crisis which, with appropriate financial and regulatory assistance from State and Federal authorities, ends citywide greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible, but no later than 2030, and immediate initiation of efforts to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere, ensuring a just transition for residents and accelerating adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying local climate impacts.

(2) Issuance of an order directing that an all-staff meeting be held to educate city staff on the latest climate science and the mobilization of resources needed in response.

(3) Immediate initiation of a multigenerational effort to draw down greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere in as short a time as possible and to develop research in support of this goal.

(4) Immediate initiation of a massive effort to restore ecosystems within the Elgin City limits.

(5) Formulation of the City of Elgin's response to the climate emergency based on a just transition framework that focuses on equity, self-determination, culture, tradition, democracy and the fundamental human right of all people in the world to clean, healthy and adequate air, water, land, food, education and shelter.

(6) Engagement of the public in Climate Emergency-related deliberations on a massive scale, so that the citizens of Elgin can influence, and see their influence on, the policy and resource decisions that impact their daily lives and their future.

(7) Continuation of encouragement to nongovernment actors to assist in the development and implementation of solutions to the challenges presented by climate change.

(b) The City of Elgin calls on the State of Illinois, the United States Congress, the President of the United States and all governments and people worldwide to declare a Climate Emergency, and to immediately and urgently mobilize all possible resources to reverse global warming and ecological crisis and provide maximum protection for all people and species of the world.

In furtherance of this resolution, the Elgin City Clerk shall submit a certified copy of this resolution to elected officials at the state and county levels and request that all relevant support and assistance in effectuating this resolution be provided.