



RESOLUTION TO DECLARE A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

SIERRA CLUB –San Diego Chapter, North County Group

WHEREAS, according to the October 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, human emission of greenhouse gases and other climate pollutants, if unchecked, is likely to induce global warming at or in excess of 1.5°C (2.7°F) above normal by between 2030 and 2052, and therefore increase the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events (e.g., heat, drought, heavy precipitation);¹

WHEREAS, in 2019 more than 13,500 scientist signatories from around the world clearly and unequivocally declared that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency, and that the climate crisis is more severe than previously predicted, with rapid climate disruption threatening natural ecosystems, biodiversity, food production, human health, economic stability, and global security;^{2,3}

WHEREAS, more than half of known global climate system tipping points (e.g., irreversible ice loss, permafrost thawing, and deforestation) may already be activated, are impactful and interconnected across different biophysical systems, and potentially commit the world to long-term irreversible changes;⁴

WHEREAS, the impacts of climate change will be experienced unequally, with developing countries, people of color, and disadvantaged communities impacted first and worst, and with such countries and communities having fewer resources to adapt effectively to increased heat & climate catastrophes;^{5,6}

WHEREAS, Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune commented regarding the 2018 IPCC Special Report, “Humanity cannot afford to sleep through the blaring alarm of this wake-up call, making it clear that the catastrophic effects of climate change like famine and droughts could shape the world for those of us alive today and for generations to come if we do not act immediately;”

WHEREAS, the Sierra Club’s new climate policy acknowledges that despite efforts to prevent a climate crisis, global greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase while natural carbon sinks such as forests and wetlands continue being degraded and destroyed, and that to achieve the Sierra Club’s new target of less

¹ Valerie Masson-Delmotte et al. “IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers.” *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.* Geneva. (October 2018). <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm>

² William J. Ripple et al. "World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency." *BioScience* 70, no. 1 (January 2020): 8-12.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biz088> and <https://scientistswarning.forestry.oregonstate.edu/>

³ Emilio Granados Franco et al. “The Global Risks Report 2020.” *World Economic Forum*. (January 2020).

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risk_Report_2020.pdf

⁴ Timothy M. Lenton et al. "Climate tipping points—too risky to bet against." *Nature Publishing Group* 575. (November 2019): 592-595.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03595-0>

⁵ Tord Kjellstrom, et al. “Working on a Warmer Planet: The Impact of Heat Stress on Labour Productivity and Decent Work.” *Publications Production Unit, International Labour Organization, Geneva*. (July 2019). https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_711919.pdf

⁶ Jonathan Woetzel, et al. "Climate risk and response: Physical hazards and socioeconomic impacts." *McKinsey Global Institute*. (January 2020).

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/climate-risk-and-response-physical-hazards-and-socioeconomic-impacts>

than 1.0°C (1.8°F) global warming we must *remove* carbon dioxide from the atmosphere while *redoubling and accelerating* emissions reduction, recognizing that these approaches are complementary and compulsory;⁷

WHEREAS, when natural and agricultural lands are transformed to more intensive uses, the soil and biomass carbon on the land is often degraded or lost; at the same time, GHG emissions from the new land use – such as vehicle miles traveled, and other effects of a suburban landscape – may increase. On average, approximately 50,000 acres of farmland and rangeland are lost in California per year, of which 21,000 acres per year are lost to urbanization⁸, and

WHEREAS, San Diego County ecosystems - especially chaparral habitat - are very efficient at storing carbon, and leaving native habitats can sequester 0.2 tons/acre/year.⁹ Continued sprawl development on to these lands removes tens of thousands of metric tons of carbon sequestration per year, while also significantly increasing wildfire risk which creates even more emissions with the burning of native habitat; and

WHEREAS, Sierra Club San Diego Chapter, North County group has worked with various community advisory groups to propose actions and municipal adoption of equitable climate action planning measures around building retrofits, renewable clean energy, smart land-use planning, urban forestry, carbon farming, & clean & efficient transportation,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Sierra Club *San Diego Chapter, North County Group*:

- DECLARES that there exists a climate emergency that threatens human populations and economies, biodiversity, and natural habitats in our city, county, state, nation, and planet;
- RECOGNIZES that this resolution can catalyze adoption of other resolutions to drive emergency climate actions at local, state, national, and international levels;
- CALLS on local governments, businesses, civil society, and residents to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible, and simultaneously protect local and regional habitat that provides nature-based carbon sequestration;
- WILL WORK in partnership with communities experiencing systemic racism, disproportionate climate impacts, and other inequities to achieve essential environmental justice goals;
- WILL ENCOURAGE its members to recognize our climate crisis and engage with other activists in coalition to call for local, regional, and national action to address our climate emergency; and
- WILL COMMIT to analyze emissions arising from or associated with Group operations and within 120 days issue a report with recommendations on how to reduce these emissions for Executive Committee consideration.

APPROVED October 21, 2020

by the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club, San Diego Chapter, North County Group

⁷ Sierra Club Board of Directors. "Climate Resilience, Carbon Dioxide Removal, and Geoengineering Policy." (March 2020). <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/2020-Sierra-Club-Climate-Resilience-Policy.pdf>

⁸ Estimate based on California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program data from 1992-2016 <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Farmland%20Conversion%20Reports.aspx>

⁹[Luo et al. Chaparral as Carbon sink](#)