DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Resolution

RESOLUTION OF THE DURHAM COUNTY COMMISSION SUPPORTING A TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY, THE CREATION OF GREEN JOBS, AND A FEDERAL PRICE ON CARBON

WHEREAS, climate change is real, it is affecting our community now, and the choices we make today will affect future generations; and

WHEREAS, an increase in the global average temperature, if not stopped, will have major adverse impacts on both the natural and human-made environments due to longer, more intense heat waves, prolonged droughts, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, 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 mass extinctions of species; and

WHEREAS, low-income communities and communities of color in North Carolina and the United States are disproportionately exposed to hazardous pollutants released by fossil fuel burning that can lead to serious health problems such as cancer and asthma exacerbation; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Durham's former mayor William V. "Bill" Bell joined over 1,000 other mayors in signing on to the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to commit to significantly reduce carbon emissions in their cities to combat climate change, and Mayor Steve Schewel has recommitted Durham to this agreement going forward; and

WHEREAS, former Mayor William V. "Bill" Bell committed Durham to upholding the commitments of the Paris Agreement through the Mayors National Climate Action Agenda; and

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WHEREAS, Durham County's Strategic Plan Goal 4 is to "Protect natural resources and support and promote community and economic vitality for all residents of Durham County"; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, the City of Durham and Durham County became the first local governments in the state of North Carolina to adopt a Greenhouse Gas and Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Inventory and Local Action Plan for Emission Reductions which calls for a 30 percent reduction from 2005 emission levels by 2030 for the community and a 50 percent reduction from 2005 emission levels for local government operations; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina ranks second in the nation in installed solar electricity capacity and has more offshore wind energy potential than any Atlantic state.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Durham County Commission that:

SECTION 1:
Durham County, North Carolina shall establish a plan and work to achieve a transition from fossil fuel-powered operations to 100 percent clean, renewable energy by December 31, 2050 and 80 percent by 2030, to build a more resilient community, to promote job creation and sustainable economic growth, and to protect our local community and the Earth for current and future generations. This commitment shall aspire to transition all energy sectors in County operations in an economically responsible and technologically feasible manner.

Clean, renewable energy is defined as energy derived from ongoing natural processes that rapidly replenish and is sustainably collected from renewable sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal. Other approaches may be included after being evaluated for sustainability and environmental justice implications. Energy efficiency will continue to be an important part of our approach by minimizing the amount of energy used overall.

The County firmly commits to achieving equity, affordability, and access for all members of the community in the transition to renewable energy. Furthermore, we commit to a transparent and inclusive process for planning and implementation, ensuring that the public has an opportunity to participate as the County develops and adopts a transition plan.

To achieve this transition, the County will work with surrounding communities to achieve aligned clean energy and equity goals and advocate for necessary policy and regulatory changes at the state, regional, and federal level.

SECTION 2:
The County calls on the state of North Carolina:

- To establish a transition from fossil fuels to 100 percent clean renewable energy for all energy sectors by 2050 and 80 percent clean renewable energy for all energy sectors by 2030; and
- For Governor Roy Cooper to establish a Governor's Work Group to help local governments partner with the state to achieve this goal; and

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- For the North Carolina General Assembly to enact policies and budgetary decisions that support a sustainable and clean energy economy for our state; and
- To strengthen the energy building code for new and renovated buildings and incentivize energy efficiency for existing buildings.

SECTION 3:
The County calls on Duke Energy, other utilities, and the NC Utility Commission to work with local governments, the NC General Assembly, and the Governor's Office to develop and implement a strategy to achieve the goals laid out in Sections 1 and 2. As nearly all County electricity is supplied by Duke Energy, it is imperative that our electric utility show leadership by aggressively increasing the percentage of renewable energy in the state.

SECTION 4:
The County calls on the federal government to establish a national transition from fossil fuels to 100 percent clean renewable energy for all energy sectors by 2050 and 80 percent clean renewable energy for all energy sectors by 2030.

To facilitate and accelerate this transition, the County urges our Congressional representatives to support federal fee-and-dividend carbon legislation that levies an annually increasing revenue neutral fee on the carbon in fossil fuels at the point of production and importation that would be sufficient to:

- Encourage individuals and corporations to produce and use less fossil fuels; and
- Make the transition from fossil fuels less onerous to consumers and to the economy by returning all the revenues gained from the fee to Americans on an equitable basis; and
- Reduce US CO2-equivalent emissions to 40 percent of 1990 levels by 2020; and
- Encourage similar actions by other nations trading with the United States.

This 13th day of November 2018.

Wendy Jacobs, Chair

James Hill, Jr., Vice-Chair

Heidi Carter, Commissioner

Brenda A. Howerton, Commissioner

Ellen Reckhow, Commissioner