

1 2019-2020 Term
2 3rd Session

3 **2019-3-008 SR**

4
5 In the Iowa State University Student Government Senate

6 February 5th, 2020

7 Speaker Alucard (for herself, Senator Searles, Senator Conn, and Director of Sustainability Wilde)
8 introduced the following bill

9
10 **AN ORDER**

11
12 TITLE: Declaration of Climate Emergency

13
14 WHEREAS: Global scale climate change has been scientifically linked to anthropogenic causes by the
15 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change scientists¹, and

16
17 WHEREAS: The impacts of this climate change can be easily seen globally through wildfires, polar
18 vortices, droughts, increased storm intensity, flooding, etc., and

19
20 WHEREAS: Any failure to acknowledge the global implications of climate change is willful ignorance
21 of indisputable scientific fact, and

22
23 WHEREAS: Iowa State University of Science and Technology prides itself on scientific discovery and
24 advancement and markets cutting edge research in many academic fields, and

25
26 WHEREAS: The Climate Commitment Plan adopted by Iowa State Student Government in 2019,
27 contained goals around creating a university sustainability group, comprised of students
28 and faculty, that is charged with overseeing the implementation of climate efforts at Iowa
29 State such as working with campus departments to create a Strategic Plan addressing
30 climate change and transitioning to 100% renewable electricity by 2035², and

31
32 WHEREAS: Globally, low-income families spend 50-60% of their household income on food, while
33 for the wealthiest, it is less than 10% and, due to climate change, food prices will increase
34 substantially, with predictions like a 23% increase in South Asia and 77% in Sub-Saharan
35 Africa and, because of this, 100 million low-income people in the poorest countries in the
36 world will be in poverty by 2030 and will be unable to afford food³, and

37
38 WHEREAS: Climate extremes negatively impact crop and livestock productivity. This is due in part to
39 increased soil erosion and runoff, and an increase of unwanted pests and pathogens due to
40 increased temperature and precipitation.¹² With Iowa being an agricultural state, climate
41 change has an extremely negative impact on our economy, and

42
43 WHEREAS: Oil and gas companies including bp, Shell, Chevron, and others have acknowledged the
44 existence of climate change, and have committed to reducing emissions in their

¹ IPCC, "Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers",
https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf

² Iowa State Student Government, "Climate Commitment Plan", Ames, Iowa

³ Gabe Bullard, "See What Climate Change Means for the World's Poor",
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/12/151201-datapoints-climate-change-poverty-agriculture/#close>

45 operations, investing in green infrastructure, growing low carbon offers for customers,
46 and working with policy makers to design balanced and transparent greenhouse gas
47 (GHG) emissions reductions policies to address environmental concerns,^{4,5,6} and
48
49 WHEREAS: The impending climate crisis is a non- partisan issues with the Department of Defense
50 under the President Trump administration, as well as the past four administrations, stating
51 that, “The effects of a changing climate are a national security issue with potential
52 impacts to Department of Defense missions, operational plans, and installations”,⁷ and
53
54 WHEREAS: On July 20th 2019, University of Iowa Student Government passed legislation at the
55 conference of the Alliance of the Big Ten Schools which led to all of the big ten schools
56 signing on to declare a climate emergency,⁸ and
57
58 WHEREAS: The University of Northern Iowa and the University of Iowa have both declared a climate
59 emergency within their respective student governments to portray to their students and
60 university leaders that climate change is a real and immediate threat to the state of Iowa,
61 and, as a university priding itself in science and technology, Iowa State University must
62 show its dedication to responding to changing science and technology by declaring a
63 climate emergency,^{9,10} and
64
65 WHEREAS: Over 809 million people are represented by over 1,300 local governments and 25
66 countries that have declared a Climate Emergency including 75 in the United States¹¹, be
67 it therefore
68
69 RESOLVED: Iowa State University Student Government supports the declaration of a climate
70 emergency to display that all regent universities in Iowa are concerned and invested in
71 making a change, and be it further
72
73 RESOLVED: Iowa State University should be committed to reducing fossil fuel use and taking steps to
74 shut down the coal and natural gas burners at the power plant on campus, and be it further
75 RESOLVED: Iowa State University create a structured and detailed plan to reach carbon neutrality as
76 soon as possible, and be it further

⁴ Bp, “The energy transition: the world needs more energy with fewer emissions. Bp is playing an active role in meeting this dual challenge”, <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/sustainability/climate-change.html>

⁵ Shell, “Adapting to Climate Change”, <https://www.shell.com/sustainability/environment/climate-change/adapting-to-climate-change.html>

⁶ Chevron, “Climate Change: we proactively consider climate change in our business decisions”, <https://www.chevron.com/corporate-responsibility/climate-change>

⁷ John Conger, “New Pentagon Report: ‘The effects of a changing climate are a national security issue’”, <https://climateandsecurity.org/2019/01/18/new-pentagon-report-the-effects-of-a-changing-climate-are-a-national-security-issue/>

⁸ University of Iowa Student Government, “Joint Resolution on the Climate Change Call to Action”, Iowa City, IA

⁹ Northern Iowa Student Government, “A Resolution in Support of the Declaration of a Climate Emergency”, Cedar Falls, IA

¹⁰ University of Iowa Student Government, “Joint Resolution on the Climate Change Call to Action”, Iowa City, IA

¹¹ The Climate Mobilization, “Climate Emergency Campaign”, <https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/climate-emergency-campaign>

¹² Iowa. Department of Natural Resources, “Climate Change”, <https://www.iowadnr.gov/conservation/climate-change>

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78 RESOLVED: Iowa State University works with local, county, and state community members and
79 stakeholders to strategically set feasible goals and plans of action to combat climate
80 change.

81

82 RESOLVED: Iowa State University should commit to educating students and faculty about climate
83 change through expert panels, presentations, campus-wide sustainability events, and
84 reforming curriculum to include a required sustainability course. And be it further

85

86 RESOLVED: This Declaration of Climate Emergency will be sent to President Wendy Wintersteen, the
87 Board of Regents, Dr. Bill Gutowski, the University Sustainability Committee, the
88 Sustainability Advisory Committee and forwarded to the Graduate and Professional
89 Student Senate to vote on as a joint resolution.