

1 2019-2020 Term  
2 3rd Session

3 **2019-3-008 SR**

4  
5 In the Iowa State University Student Government Senate

6 February 5<sup>th</sup>, 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

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14 WHEREAS: Global scale climate change has been scientifically linked to anthropogenic causes by the  
15 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change scientists<sup>1</sup>, 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 2035<sup>2</sup>, 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 food<sup>3</sup>, 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.<sup>12</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC, "Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers",  
[https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/AR5\\_SYR\\_FINAL\\_SPM.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Iowa State Student Government, "Climate Commitment Plan", Ames, Iowa

<sup>3</sup> 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,<sup>4,5,6</sup> 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”,<sup>7</sup> 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,<sup>8</sup> 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,<sup>9,10</sup> 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 States<sup>11</sup>, 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

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<sup>4</sup> 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>

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

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

<sup>7</sup> 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/>

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

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

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

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

<sup>12</sup> 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.