



**CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
RESOLUTION 2020 - 1**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRE REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PRAGMATIC, FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE STRATEGY TO  
MITIGATE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND ADAPT TO CHANGING CLIMATE CONDITIONS**

**Preamble:** The Centre Region has a tradition of responsible stewardship, prudent fiscal accountability, and inclusive local government and community practices. All six Centre Region municipalities are Sustainable Pennsylvania certified which is recognition for the policy and practice of sustainability as their way of operating in order to advance community prosperity. State College Borough, Ferguson Township and Harris Township have passed resolutions to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The municipalities each recognize that many actions needed to address climate change will be more effective with regional and cooperative efforts.

**WHEREAS**, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has determined that Pennsylvania's temperatures have risen around 1.1°C (1.8°F) since the beginning of the 20th century and that temperatures in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been higher than any other historical period; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Weather Service (NWS) has determined that the average annual precipitation in Pennsylvania has increased about 10% in the past 110 years, and NWS indicates that during that time period State College experienced a 70% increase in extreme rain events (greater than two inches); and

**WHEREAS**, the Pennsylvania Auditor General reported that in 2018 climate-related costs to Pennsylvania totaled at least \$261 million; that number includes record-breaking floods and landslides that caused over \$125.7 million in infrastructure damages; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centre Region completed a GHG emissions inventory and found that in 2016 the Region contributed 824,190 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e (metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent); and

**WHEREAS**, 67% of the Centre Region GHG emissions came from energy consumption in 2016, and that energy is one of the largest operating costs that municipalities incur; and

**WHEREAS**, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change *Global Warming of 1.5°C Report*, the U.S. *Fourth National Climate Assessment*, and the *15th Global Risk Report of the World Economic Forum* all conclude that climate disruption is a present danger to human health, the environment, and the economy; and

**WHEREAS**, Pennsylvania is part of the US Climate Alliance, which is a bipartisan coalition of 24 governors committed to holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursuing GHG efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in order to prevent catastrophic harm to people and ecological systems on which life depends;

**WHEREAS**, municipal actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy efficiency and protect the region from climate vulnerabilities provide multiple local benefits by decreasing air pollution, creating jobs, reducing energy expenditures, and saving money for the local government, businesses, and residents; and

**WHEREAS**, both the magnitude and speed needed to achieve GHG emission reductions necessary to prevent dangerous human-induced warming urgently requires all local government entities to cooperate with other levels of government, the private sector, educational institutions, agriculture, and others to rapidly develop strategies to reduce GHG emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Article 1, Section 27 guarantees that, “The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania’s public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustees of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people;” and

**WHEREAS**, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection found Pennsylvania contributes approximately 1% of global GHG emissions, which, according to the Commonwealth’s 2015 *Pennsylvania Climate Impacts Assessment Report*, is affecting agriculture, energy, human health, infrastructure, recreation, water quality, forests, and other ecosystems in Pennsylvania, and human health and ecological systems around the world; and

**WHEREAS**, green building practices and standards have been established, energy efficient buildings make communities more resilient, and the cost of alternative renewable energy is reaching price parity with non-renewable energy; and

**WHEREAS**, green building and renewable energy industries employ thousands of Pennsylvanians; and

**WHEREAS**, agriculture and forestry have played important roles in the Centre Region’s economy and culture for generations, and are integral in sequestering carbon, providing additional ecosystem services, beauty, and recreation, as well as afford a high quality of life for people and our environment; and

**WHEREAS**, universities in Pennsylvania, including the Pennsylvania State University, provide jobs that research, support, and educate Pennsylvania’s renewable energy industry and conduct international, national, state-level, and local climate assessments and planning assistance; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HERE RESOLVED:** that the Centre Region Council of Governments shall:

1. Immediately begin to develop a regional plan to:
  - Achieve a 45% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 based on 2010 levels
  - Achieve an 80% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050 based on 2010 levels
  - Offset the remaining 20% of GHG emissions in 2050 with carbon offset projects to be carbon neutral in 2050
  - Engage peer governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and universities to (i) raise awareness of climate change, (ii) identify and encourage courses of action to reduce the amount of GHG emissions, (iii) identify and encourage courses of action to lessen the impacts of changing climate conditions and (iv) embrace the opportunities of climate adaptation; and
2. Continue to lead by example to rapidly pursue these goals in a manner that is transparent, fair, and economically responsible; and
3. Encourage local projects and local impacts first, prior to making an investment out of the region to provide long-term benefits to the region; and
4. Promote “clean, renewable energy” to achieve the stated goals which includes energy produced from environmentally beneficial technologies. Technologies will be evaluated for carbon impact, public health and environmental justice implications.

**RESOLVED**, this *twenty-seventh day of July 2020*, meeting in regular session.

Attest:

By:

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Eric Norenberg  
Executive Director, Centre Region COG

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Elliot Abrams  
Chair, Centre Region COG