

**LEON COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 23-**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS OF LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA,  
ENDORISING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY  
AND EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION EFFORT TO RESTORE A SAFE  
CLIMATE IN LEON COUNTY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE  
DATE.**

**RECITALS**

**WHEREAS**, in April 2016 world leaders recognized the urgent need to combat climate change by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep global warming “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C;” and

**WHEREAS**, a 2018 United Nations special report projected that limiting warming to even the dangerous 1.5°C target this century will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy by 2030, and the 2019 United Nations Emissions Gap Report found that global civilization must achieve zero carbon emissions by 2030 through deeper and faster emissions cuts than previously recommended; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States of America has disproportionately contributed to the climate and ecological emergencies and thus bears an extraordinary responsibility to rapidly solve these crises; and

**WHEREAS**, anthropogenic climate change, pollution, environmental destruction, and fossil fuel extraction and use have and will continue to exacerbate systemic racial, regional, social, environmental, and economic crises (referred to in this resolution as “systemic crises”) by disproportionately affecting indigenous, migrant, minority, deindustrialized, and depopulated rural communities, impoverished individuals, low-income workers, women, the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities, and the youth (referred to in this resolution as “frontline and vulnerable communities/persons”); and

**WHEREAS**, the nation is currently experiencing an emergency defined by climatic, ecological, and systemic crises (referred to in this resolution as “climate emergency”) that are generating current and rapidly escalating harm; and

**WHEREAS**, the massive scope and scale of action necessary to stabilize the climate and biosphere will require unprecedented levels of public awareness, engagement, and deliberation to develop and implement effective, just, and equitable policies to address the climate emergency no later than 2030 and initiates an effort to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere, ensuring a just transition for residents and accelerating adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying local climate impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, a ‘just transition’ is prioritized. A ‘just transition’ includes:

- Addressing past and ongoing harms by focusing on the principles of justice, inclusion, diversity, equity, and democracy during the transition to a zero-emissions, renewable energy economy, and thriving ecology;
- Security of basic needs and job training for everyone as a guaranteed public good, to enable an easier transition to renewable energy and low-carbon jobs;
- Expanding workers' rights and protections to prioritize their well-being amidst the effects of climate change on working conditions;
- Democratic and participatory processes that enable communities to collectively plan, implement, administer, and benefit from transitional changes in their localities;
- Ensure the prosperity and security of all residents in Leon County through a healthy economy and environment, allowing these communities to share in the benefits of the transition equally.

**WHEREAS**, the warming climate poses a threat to Leon County's native marine and land habitats, leading to the rapid increase of invasive species. These invasive species have the potential to disrupt and alter ecosystems and natural processes; and

**WHEREAS**, Leon County recognizes that the full participation, inclusion, support, and leadership of community organizations, faith communities, youth, labor organizations, academic institutions, indigenous groups, and racial, gender, family, immigrant, and disability justice organizations and other allies are integral to the climate emergency response and mobilization efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, Leon County has committed to and worked towards further reducing greenhouse gas emissions from County operations by 30% by 2030; and

**WHEREAS**, Leon County's Integrated Sustainability Action Plan (ISAP) is a sustainability strategic plan to institutionalize sustainability action into operations, protocol, and policy, as well as promote sustainability in the community more broadly; and

**WHEREAS**, Leon County recognizes that the full participation, inclusion, support, and leadership of community organizations and citizens are integral to the climate emergency response and mobilization efforts, and as such Leon County's sustainability program is rooted in citizen and stakeholder engagement; and

**WHEREAS**, to provide a structure/framework for a regional climate compact Leon County led the creation and actively participates in the Capital Area Sustainability Compact.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA, that:

1. Leon County declares that a climate and ecological emergency threatens our county, city, region, state, nation, society, humanity, and the natural environment.

2. Leon County will work to ensure meaningful engagement of youth, providing routine and ongoing opportunities to provide input regarding environmental factors integral to climate change and give up-to-date scientific research in the efforts to aid in providing a solution with the most equitable outcome. Furthermore, citizens of all ages are invited to present in any commission meeting that may proceed.
3. Leon County directs the County Administrator to work with the existing Sustainability Staff/Department to include greenhouse gas and co-pollutant impact statements, greenhouse gas and co-pollutant reduction, and greenhouse gas drawdown statements on all relevant agenda items before the County Commission.
4. Leon County will implement a native plant clause that addresses the hazards of invasive plant species. Furthermore, the implementation of the plant clause will promote county partnerships with local plant nurseries to engage and educate the community in plant-related events. The clause will include:
  - The importance of planting native plant species to preserve Tallahassee's biodiversity and food sustainability, as well as promote eco-tourism.
  - To further achieve these objectives, educational initiatives shall be established to raise awareness among residents, landowners, businesses, and visitors about the ecological benefits of the county's native plants and the detrimental impacts of invasive species. Additionally, resources shall be allocated to support community engagement programs that promote the adoption of sustainable practices and native plant species in both urban and rural landscapes.
  - By enacting this clause, Leon County affirms its commitment to safeguarding the region's native flora, supporting its diverse wildlife, and nurturing a thriving eco-tourism industry that highlights the county's natural beauty and ecological significance for the benefit of current and future generations.
5. Leon County commits to furthering efforts to improve the water quality and safety while minimizing the pollution and algal blooms of local water bodies, including but not limited to Lake Munson.
6. Leon County commits to continuing to keep the concerns of frontline and vulnerable communities central to all current and future sustainability and climate action planning processes by inviting and encouraging such communities to actively participate in the development and implementation of the Integrated Sustainability Action Plan and all climate mobilization efforts.

7. Leon County commits to openly support the local food justice movement and publicly owned community gardens to mitigate food scarcity and promote food security and acknowledge the role that global warming plays in food access and production. These gardens will be used in defense against food insecurity and food deserts within frontline and vulnerable communities.
8. Leon County will communicate with the disabled community and those needing accommodations to devise equitable and inclusive solutions to address the climate crisis which do not jeopardize the well-being of any of the groups of people stated herein.
9. Leon County commits to collaborating with community partners to increase climate literacy and education in the community, including K-12 schools.
10. The County Commission must recognize and address the impacts of the climate emergency and work to ensure prosperity and stability for all people in Leon County.
11. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption hereof.

DONE, ADOPTED AND PASSED by the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, this 12th day of September, 2023.

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nick Maddox Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

ATTESTED BY:  
Gwendolyn Marshall Knight, Clerk of Court  
& Comptroller, Leon County, Florida

By: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
Chasity H. O'Steen, County Attorney  
Leon County Attorney's Office

By: \_\_\_\_\_