

**Date:** September 23, 2020

**Subject:** Proposal for a Declaration of Climate Emergency Resolution for the City of Biddeford

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We the City of Biddeford Conservation Commission accept the following:

- 1) That there is irrefutable and overwhelming scientific evidence that our planet is warming due to greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2) That the Gulf of Maine temperature is warming at a rate 99% faster than the temperature of the global oceans.
- 3) That the coastal zones within the city shall be threatened by an increasing sea level rise of 8 inches to 6.6 feet by the end of this century<sup>2</sup> and these estimates could be significantly greater.
- 4) That the probability of increasing frequency and severity of coastal storms is high due to rising sea level and temperatures.
- 5) That economic costs due to the local effects of climate change have been projected to be very significant and include:
  - Damage and replacement of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, public buildings, water and sewage facilities.
  - Relocation of private residences in coastal zones.
  - Loss of commercial properties in coastal zones.
  - Negative health effects due to longer, warmer seasons (Lyme Disease, Asthma, etc.)
  - Reduced fisheries including lobster, shrimp, clams, oysters, scallops, and groundfish due to warming waters, ocean acidification, and invasive species such as the Green Crab.
  - Loss of tourism
  - Loss of tax-based municipal revenue due to property lost to inundation from sea level rise.
- 6) That the effects of climate change will be irreversible within a short window of 7 – 15 years and that these effects will continue to worsen.

We therefore recommend that the City of Biddeford adopt a resolution declaring that our great city, due to its coastal proximity, publicly accepts that we have a climate emergency. Biddeford would join many other cities and towns within the United States to do so, including several in Maine, including Portland and South Portland. There are over 1,700 cities and towns across the globe that have declared Climate Emergencies. Nations, such as the United Kingdom, Canada and France have declared National Climate Emergencies.

Such a declaration should require that a plan be developed to:

- 1) Account for and publicly report our current climate risk and greenhouse gas footprint using a standardized methodology and reporting system.
- 2) Address development of new construction in shoreland zones where such construction is in high risk areas.
- 3) Develop an adaptation (infrastructure and policy changes to accommodate changes we are already experiencing) and mitigation (reduce emissions) strategy to incorporate findings in our building codes, zoning, transportation, city-wide systems, and other areas under the city's jurisdiction.
- 4) Provide a timeline to move towards carbon neutrality in public buildings and public transportation.
- 5) Collaborate with the state of Maine and surrounding towns to contribute to an efficient and effective regional plan that makes the best use of our collective resources. This may include a Climate Change Policy Coordinator as a shared resource with other coastal communities.
- 6) Work with educational institutions such as UNE to coordinate community educational outreach and engage other communities, schools, and non-profit organizations willing to participate.

References:

- 1) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; <https://noaa.gov>
- 2) National Resource Council of Maine; "Global Warming and Climate Change", <https://nrcm.org>
- 3) Maine Climate Threats, States at Risk; <https://statesatrisk.org>
- 4) Union of Concerned Scientists; "Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast: Science, Impacts and Solutions", 2007 Report
- 5) Watery Heatwave Cooks the Gulf of Maine; <https://climate.nasa.gov/news/2798/watery-heatwave-cooks-the-gulf-of-maine>
- 6) Effects of Sea Level Rise in Maine: <https://www.nrcm.org/programs/climate/global-warming-air-pollution/sea-level-rise-Maine>