

Climate Emergency Resolution for the City of Somerville

WHEREAS:

The Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on December 9, 2009 issued a finding that states "[Greenhouse gases] are the primary driver of climate change, which can lead to hotter, longer heat waves that threaten the health of the sick, poor or elderly; increases in ground-level ozone pollution linked to asthma and other respiratory illnesses; as well as other threats to the health and welfare of Americans"; and

WHEREAS:

This same U.S. EPA finding states, "The evidence of human-induced climate change goes beyond observed increases in average surface temperatures; it includes melting ice in the Arctic, melting glaciers around the world, increasing ocean temperatures, rising sea levels, acidification of the oceans due to excess carbon dioxide, changing precipitation patterns, and changing patterns of ecosystems and wildlife"; and

WHEREAS:

In January 2001, the City of Somerville passed a mayoral resolution to join the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign Program; and

WHEREAS:

In 2005 Mayor Joseph Curtatone joined [The U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement](#), pledging the City of Somerville to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol – a 7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012; and

WHEREAS:

In 2008-2009 the City of Somerville implemented an energy services contract intended to track and reduce energy consumption in municipal facilities; and

WHEREAS:

According to a 2001 report by the City of Somerville Environmental Coordinator's Office and the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives, municipal facilities and vehicles in the City of Somerville account for just 3% of the city's total greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS:

Residential and commercial buildings account for approximately 75% of the city's total greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS:

Since the greenhouse gases that cause global warming accumulate and persist in the atmosphere, sharp reductions in emissions are required immediately for there to be any possibility of forestalling the dangers of climate change; and

WHEREAS:

In March 2009, more than 2,500 climate experts from 80 countries, assembled for an emergency meeting in Copenhagen to prepare for the UN Climate Change Conference in December, declared that

"the climate system is already moving beyond patterns of natural variability within which our society and economy have developed and thrived;" that "the worst-case IPCC scenario projections (or even worse) are being realized;" that "there is a significant risk that many of the trends will accelerate, leading to a risk of abrupt or irreversible climatic shifts;" and that "there is no excuse for inaction"; and

WHEREAS: This Board of Aldermen recognizes that there is a climate emergency; now therefore be it

ORDERED:

That the Board of Aldermen request the Office of Sustainability and Environment to work with the Mayor's office to convene a public Somerville Climate Summit as soon as possible that will include:

- All City department heads;
- The Mayor's Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change;
- Local climate and energy experts;
- A broad array of community leaders; and
- At-large Somerville residents.

The purpose of the Somerville Climate Summit will be to determine how to increase the entire City's responses to a scale proportionate to the emergency and consistent with the city's own climate goals for 2012 and beyond, including:

- Integrating the City's climate goals into municipal department planning and decision-making;
- Accelerating efforts to comprehensively insulate and air-seal residential properties;
- Redoubling efforts to maximize residential, commercial and industrial energy use reduction;
- Expediting development of renewable energy, including wind, solar and geothermal;
- Transitioning to a more sustainable transportation system.