

Resolution No. 2019-1
A Resolution of the Albany High School Student Council
Calling on Congress to Act on Climate Change

WHEREAS, there is broad consensus among scientists that human activities which create greenhouse gas emissions are the dominant cause of climate change; and,

WHEREAS, the global impact, the urgency, and the magnitude of climate change calls for leadership and action in all sectors of society, all institutions, and all elected leaders; and,

WHEREAS, we believe that climate change is not a partisan issue and that local, state, and national policies should be guided by the best available science; and,

WHEREAS, young people are disproportionately impacted by national climate inaction because greenhouse gases will continue to accumulate over the coming decades and will create a profound burden throughout our lives, as well as the lives of future generations; and,

WHEREAS, climate change is a social justice and equity issue. While climate change impacts *all* people and disproportionately impacts *all* young people and future generations, it disproportionately affects people of color and low-income communities, thereby exacerbating existing inequities and limiting equality of opportunity which is a foundational aspiration for modern America;

WHEREAS, in 2015 the California PTA declared that climate change was a “children’s issue”;

WHEREAS, we support the 21 youth plaintiffs who are currently asserting a constitutional right for a livable climate in the [*Juliana v. U.S.*](#); and

WHEREAS, since December of 2017 more than 30 school boards and 4 student councils in 7 states have passed non-partisan resolutions building political will for national climate action to protect students;

WHEREAS, the Albany student council recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on America’s schools, students, and their communities.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT,

1. We declare climate change a generational justice, human rights, and equity issue;

2. We call on Congress to swiftly end 30+ years of climate neglect by enacting commonsense national climate policies, such as revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend, 100% clean energy transition plan, prohibition of the use of hydrofluorocarbons, establishment of progressive industrial efficiency standards, and/or green infrastructure investments to restore the climate for the good of young people and future generations;

3. We thank the school boards who have spoken up for climate justice by passing their own climate action resolutions. We encourage the remaining 13,000+ school boards in the country to break silence about climate justice and speak up to protect our generation and future generations.

4. We encourage all student councils, teachers' unions, PTA's, and education support organizations (such as the state and National School Boards Associations, the state and national school administrators' association, and the state and National Association of School Psychologists) to pass climate action resolutions similar to ours, calling on Congress to enact climate policies to protect current and future students.;

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

1. The student council of Albany High School celebrates existing school district sustainability initiatives such as:
 - a. *The Sustainability/Integrated Design Committee and its work*
 - b. *The AHS Earth Team*
 - c. *The AHS Air Quality Club*
 - d. *The AHS Hiking Club*
2. We encourage our school district to develop a multi-stakeholder committee to address:
 - a. Resource consumption
 - b. Electrification and energy efficiency
 - c. Development and adherence to progressive green building standards for new buildings
 - d. Direct Greenhouse Gas Measurements and Goals for Net-Zero
 - e. Climate Literacy and Climate Advocacy in the curriculum and graduation requirements
 - f. Partnerships with local, regional, state, and national agencies and organizations to advance our response to climate change
3. We direct our student council secretary to transmit official copies of this resolution to our school administration, the Schools for Climate Action campaign, all student councils in our district and neighboring districts, our district, county, and state school boards, Albany Teachers Association and Albany High School PTSA, the State School Boards

Association, all California members of Congress, the Congressional Climate Solutions Caucus, and the National School Board Association (NSBA).

Votes: Ayes: 26 Noes: 0 Abstain: _____

Signed:

_____ President

_____ Vice-President

_____ Secretary

_____ Community Sustainability Representative

_____ Witnessed by Student Council Advisor

On _____

Rationale

Research demonstrates that climate change adversely affects students’ physical and mental health and negatively impacts student achievement.

The damages caused by natural catastrophes and extreme weather events devastate local economies and therefore schools.

In 2017, the Government Accounting Agency reported that the impact of climate change to the United States was approximately \$350 billion for the preceding 10 years, and is projected to cost at least \$35 billion annually from now until 2050 when it will increase to as much as \$112 billion annually by the end of the century.

A report by the Universal Ecological Fund places the annual cost at \$240 billion. These figures did not include the devastating California wildfires of 2017/2018, the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey in South Texas, loss of Alaskan permafrost and coastal land mass, significant droughts in the western United States, increases in insect population growth leading to destruction of crops, and projected loss of low lying land in Florida, Virginia, Texas, California, and Louisiana.

Research by the World Meteorological Organization concluded that 80 percent of natural disasters between 2005 and 2015 were in some way climate related.

The insurance industry has recognized the impact of climate change. In 2010 the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) adopted an Insurer Climate Risk Disclosure Survey in response to The Potential Impact of Climate Change on Insurance Regulation white paper released by the NAIC in 2008. “The disclosure of climate risk is important because of the potential impact climate change can have on insurer solvency and the availability and affordability of insurance across all major categories.”

In addition to the projected costs due to major flooding affecting coastal schools, there will be increased electricity demands due to heat and air quality for inland schools requiring increasing amounts of air conditioning and possible indoor gyms for physical education and athletics.

The specific costs to school infrastructure including the loss of buildings and lands as well as declines in tax revenue and increases in insurance rates has not been determined, however it is expected to be billions of dollars. It is vital that climate change be slowed so that school districts and their communities can spend precious dollars in classrooms to support the students of today and for future generations.