

**Town of Lexington  
Motion  
Special Town Meeting 2020-2**

**ARTICLE 4**

**DECLARE CLIMATE EMERGENCY (Citizen Petition)**

**MOTION:** That the Town adopt the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, in April 2016 world leaders from 175 countries recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep warming “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C”;

**WHEREAS**, the destruction already brought by a global warming of approximately 1°C, including increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, rising seas, droughts, and extreme weather highlights how the Earth is already too hot for safety and justice;

**WHEREAS**, the industrialized countries have disproportionately contributed to the climate and ecological crises and thus bear a responsibility to rapidly work toward a resolution of these existential threats;

**WHEREAS**, restoring a safe and stable climate requires a mobilization effort on a scale not seen since World War II to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors in order to rapidly and safely decrease or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and to implement measures to protect all people and species from the consequences of abrupt climate change;

**WHEREAS**, addressing climate change fairly requires a transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy that is ecologically sustainable and equitable for all people, especially those most impacted by climate change already and those who will be most impacted in the future;

**WHEREAS**, building a society that is resilient to the current, expected, and potential effects of climate change will protect health, lives, ecosystems, and economies, and such resilience efforts will have the greatest positive impact if the most dramatic potential consequences of climate change are taken into account;

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Lexington has demonstrated a commitment to making Lexington a greener, more sustainable and resilient Town by:

- A. (2007) building the Samuel Hadley Public Service Building, the Town’s first LEED silver certified building, designed and built to specific environmental standards;
- B. (2007) approving the Town of Lexington Energy Guidelines to establish common environmental parameters for public buildings;
- C. (2010) creating the Sustainable Lexington Committee;
- D. (2010) adopting the state’s optional ‘Stretch’ Energy Code to call for improved building energy efficiency;
- E. (2010) becoming one of the first towns in Massachusetts to be designated a Green Community;
- F. (2013) adopting a Climate Change Resolution to consider climate change in all appropriate decisions;
- G. (2016) signing the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy;
- H. (2016) approving the Community Choice Aggregation program to move the Town’s electricity to 100% renewable energy;
- I. (2017) joining the U.S. Compact of Mayors;

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- J. (2018) adopting the Lexington Sustainable Action plan to provide a structured approach to identify, prioritize, and implement Town sustainability initiatives;
- K. (2017) installing 6 acres of solar panels at the Hartwell Ave. site;
- L. (2018) banning the usage of thin-film single-use plastic bags from all retail or grocery stores;
- M. (2019) approving the hiring of a Sustainability Director to coordinate and implement the Town's Sustainable Action Plan and advance sustainability objectives;
- N. (2019) constructing the Town's first net zero energy school, Lexington Children's Place;
- O. (2019) adopting an integrated building design & construction policy for all school and municipal buildings to maximize sustainability objectives and onsite energy production; and
- P. (2019) executing a power purchase agreement with a private contractor for low-cost, long-term solar production;
- Q. (2019) banning the use of petroleum-based straws, stirrers, and expanded polystyrene single-use food ware from all food establishments and public buildings.

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Lexington is currently undertaking ambitious capital projects that include significant investment in green infrastructure and sustainable building design;

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Lexington acknowledges that residents of Lexington call for rapid reduction in greenhouse emissions and greater investment in renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, and clean transportation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Lexington can act as a global leader by converting to an ecologically, socially, and economically regenerative economy as expeditiously as possible;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Town of Lexington declares that a climate emergency threatens our town, region, state, nation, civilization, humanity and the natural world;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Town of Lexington commits to a town-wide climate emergency mobilization effort to combat global warming, which, with appropriate financial and regulatory assistance from State and Federal authorities, would further the goal of ending town-wide greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible and no later than 2035;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Town of Lexington commits to educating our residents about the climate emergency;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Town of Lexington underscores the need for full community participation, inclusion, and support, and recognizes that the residents of Lexington, community organizations, academic institutions, faith, youth, labor, business and homeowners associations and groups, as well as groups focused on environmental, food and economic issues will be integral to and in the leadership of the mobilization effort;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Town of Lexington joins a nation-wide call for a regional collaborative effort focused on transforming our region and rapidly catalyzing a mobilization at all levels of government to restore a safe climate; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Town of Lexington calls on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the United States of America, and peoples worldwide to initiate a mobilization effort to reverse global warming by restoring near pre-industrial global average temperatures and greenhouse gas concentrations,

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by immediately halting the development of all new fossil-fuel infrastructure, and as quickly as possible phasing out all fossil fuels and the technologies which rely upon them, ending other greenhouse gas emissions, and initiating an effort to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere.

(09/18/2020)