



City of Ann Arbor

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Legislation Text

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Resolution to Support and Authorize Staff Participation in Washtenaw County Climate Strike on September 20, 2019

On September 20, three days before the United Nations Climate Summit in New York City, young people and adults will strike all across the US and world to demand transformative action to address the climate crisis. This youth-led action emerged from the “Fridays for Future” campaign initiated by Greta Thunberg, a Swedish youth who began walking out of classes on Fridays to draw attention to the global climate crisis. Within a short period of time, thousands of youth from around the world began emulating Greta, demanding that leaders around the world take action to immediately end the use of fossil fuels and embrace a just transition to a clean energy future.

To show solidarity with the “Fridays for Future” campaign, youth from around the world organized the *Global Week for Future* initiative. This initiative runs from September 20th - September 27th and is a week-long call for climate action. Individuals and organizations from around the world are using this week to bring a laser focus to the urgent need for climate action. In the U.S. (and around the world), youth have chosen September 20th as the day for an international climate strike.

As such, on September 20, 2019, youth leaders from across the region have orchestrated the Washtenaw County Climate Strike. This strike will take place from 12pm-3pm on the Ingalls Mall of the University of Michigan. The organizers of this strike are youth from our middle schools, high schools, and colleges and universities. These youth have asked adults from across the community to join them in striking. To-date, more than 33 organizations have stepped up to show their solidarity with the Washtenaw County Climate Strike organizers. These organizations include local, regional, and statewide nonprofits; businesses; professional societies; and labor leaders.

On September 20th high school teachers in Washtenaw County will walk out with their students, business owners will close their doors, professors from the University of Michigan will leave their lecture halls, faith leaders will join their congregations, and unions will stand with their workers. Together, these individuals and their organizations will strike to demand an end to the use of fossil fuels and movement towards a just transition to clean energy.

Members of the Washtenaw County Climate Strike organizing team have reached out the City of Ann Arbor asking for the City to show its solidarity with local youth organizing this work. While individual members of staff have expressed an interest in joining the strikers, no formal City policy of support for the Climate Strike exists. This resolution seeks to fill that void and demonstrate the City’s overall support for the climate strike, for our youth, and for meaningful and deep climate action.

Prepared by: Mayor Taylor

Reviewed by: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

Whereas, The 2018 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Special Report on Global Warming made clear the unprecedented dangers of going beyond 1.5°C of global heating and the urgent need to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% or more before 2030;

Whereas, Research shows that youth are disproportionately impacted by the mental health ramifications of inaction on climate change, including deep despair, anxiety <<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/climate-change-poses-mental-health-risks-children-and-teens>>, depression <[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(17\)30045-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(17)30045-1/fulltext)>, and overall uncertainty regarding their future;

Whereas, Youth from around the world have risen up to ask for the end of fossil fuel usage and a just transition to a clean energy future in order to ensure the viability of their futures;

Whereas, Ending all use of fossil fuels is an imperative to achieving a just and clean energy future;

Whereas, Ending the use of fossil fuels will mean impacts to those employed in fossil fuel industries and their communities, meaning that a guarantee of good paying jobs for these workers will be needed as the economy decarbonizes;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor has passed multiple resolutions and policies in support of meaningful climate action, including established a goal to achieve a 90% reduction in communitywide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (or before); and

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor has sustained source of funding to support climate action within City government and throughout our community;

RESOLVED, That the Ann Arbor City Council encourages and supports all residents, businesses, staff, and allies in joining our youth leaders at the September 20th, 2019 Climate Strike;

RESOLVED, City Council supports all interested individuals to meet in front of City Hall at 11:30 a.m. on September 20th to walk to the Climate Strike together; and

RESOLVED, City Council directs the City Administrator to share this resolution with all City staff and requests that the municipal organization support all who may be interested in joining in on the strike and to authorize the use of staff personal or leave time as their missions allow to participate in the September 20, 2019 Climate Strike.

Sponsored by: Mayor Taylor and Councilmember Griswold