2019-2020 Term
3rd Session

2019-3-008 SR

In the Iowa State University Student Government Senate
February 5th, 2020
Speaker Alucard (for herself, Senator Searles, Senator Conn, and Director of Sustainability Wilde)
introduced the following bill

AN ORDER

TITLE: Declaration of Climate Emergency

WHEREAS: Global scale climate change has been scientifically linked to anthropogenic causes by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change scientists[1], and

WHEREAS: The impacts of this climate change can be easily seen globally through wildfires, polar vortices, droughts, increased storm intensity, flooding, etc., and

WHEREAS: Any failure to acknowledge the global implications of climate change is willful ignorance of indisputable scientific fact, and

WHEREAS: Iowa State University of Science and Technology prides itself on scientific discovery and advancement and markets cutting edge research in many academic fields, and

WHEREAS: The Climate Commitment Plan adopted by Iowa State Student Government in 2019, contained goals around creating a university sustainability group, comprised of students and faculty, that is charged with overseeing the implementation of climate efforts at Iowa State such as working with campus departments to create a Strategic Plan addressing climate change and transitioning to 100% renewable electricity by 2035[2], and

WHEREAS: Globally, low-income families spend 50-60% of their household income on food, while for the wealthiest, it is less than 10% and, due to climate change, food prices will increase substantially, with predictions like a 23% increase in South Asia and 77% in Sub-Saharan Africa and, because of this, 100 million low-income people in the poorest countries in the world will be in poverty by 2030 and will be unable to afford food[3], and

WHEREAS: Climate extremes negatively impact crop and livestock productivity. This is due in part to increased soil erosion and runoff, and an increase of unwanted pests and pathogens due to increased temperature and precipitation.[12] With Iowa being an agricultural state, climate change has an extremely negative impact on our economy, and

WHEREAS: Oil and gas companies including bp, Shell, Chevron, and others have acknowledged the existence of climate change, and have committed to reducing emissions in their

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[1] IPCC, "Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers", https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf
[2] Iowa State Student Government, "Climate Commitment Plan", Ames, Iowa
[3] Gabe Bullard, "See What Climate Change Means for the World's Poor", https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/12/151201-datapoints-climate-change-poverty-agriculture/#close

operations, investing in green infrastructure, growing low carbon offers for customers, and working with policy makers to design balanced and transparent greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions policies to address environmental concerns,[4,5,6] and

WHEREAS: The impending climate crisis is a non- partisan issues with the Department of Defense under the President Trump administration, as well as the past four administrations, stating that, "The effects of a changing climate are a national security issue with potential impacts to Department of Defense missions, operational plans, and installations",[7] and

WHEREAS: On July 20th 2019, University of Iowa Student Government passed legislation at the conference of the Alliance of the Big Ten Schools which led to all of the big ten schools signing on to declare a climate emergency,[8] and

WHEREAS: The University of Northern Iowa and the University of Iowa have both declared a climate emergency within their respective student governments to portray to their students and university leaders that climate change is a real and immediate threat to the state of Iowa, and, as a university priding itself in science and technology, Iowa State University must show its dedication to responding to changing science and technology by declaring a climate emergency,[9,10] and

WHEREAS: Over 809 million people are represented by over 1,300 local governments and 25 countries that have declared a Climate Emergency including 75 in the United States[11], be it therefore

RESOLVED: Iowa State University Student Government supports the declaration of a climate emergency to display that all regent universities in Iowa are concerned and invested in making a change, and be it further

RESOLVED: Iowa State University should be committed to reducing fossil fuel use and taking steps to shut down the coal and natural gas burners at the power plant on campus, and be it further

RESOLVED: Iowa State University create a structured and detailed plan to reach carbon neutrality as soon as possible, and be it further

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[4] Bp, "The energy transition: the world needs more energy with fewer emissions. Bp is playing an active role in meeting this dual challenge", https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/sustainability/climate-change.html
[5] Shell, "Adapting to Climate Change, https://www.shell.com/sustainability/environment/climate-change/adapting-to-climate-change.html
[6] Chevron, "Climate Change: we proactively consider climate change in our business decisions", https://www.chevron.com/corporate-responsibility/climate-change
[7] John Conger, "New Pentagon Report: 'The effects of a changing climate are a national security issue'", https://climateandsecurity.org/2019/01/18/new-pentagon-report-the-effects-of-a-changing-climate-are-a-national-security-issue/
[8] University of Iowa Student Government, "Joint Resolution on the Climate Change Call to Action", Iowa City, IA
[9] Northern Iowa Student Government, "A Resolution in Support of the Declaration of a Climate Emergency", Cedar Falls, IA
[10] University of Iowa Student Government, "Joint Resolution on the Climate Change Call to Action", Iowa City, IA
[11] The Climate Mobilization, "Climate Emergency Campaign", https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/climate-emergency-campaign
[12] Iowa. Department of Natural Resources, "Climate Change", https://www.iowadnr.gov/conservation/climate-change

RESOLVED: Iowa State University works with local, county, and state community members and stakeholders to strategically set feasible goals and plans of action to combat climate change.

RESOLVED: Iowa State University should commit to educating students and faculty about climate change through expert panels, presentations, campus-wide sustainability events, and reforming curriculum to include a required sustainability course. And be it further

RESOLVED: This Declaration of Climate Emergency will be sent to President Wendy Wintersteen, the Board of Regents, Dr. Bill Gutowski, the University Sustainability Committee, the Sustainability Advisory Committee and forwarded to the Graduate and Professional Student Senate to vote on as a joint resolution.