

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON
RESOLUTION NO. 2021-025**

Reaffirming Multnomah County's Commitment to fossil fuel free buildings and affirming support for the update of Multnomah County's LEED Gold and High Performance Green Building Policy.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- A. The scientific consensus is clear that human activities, primarily the extraction and combustion of fossil fuels, are primarily responsible for the warming that is accelerating global climate change.
- B. Globally, 19 of the 20 hottest years on record have occurred this century, with 2020 tied with 2016 as the hottest years ever recorded.
- C. Changes in Oregon's climate are already being felt. Oregon's annual average temperature has increased by about 2.2°F per century since 1895, and 2015 was the warmest year on record in Oregon.
- D. The Oregon Climate Change Research Institute has found that climate change poses a significant threat to Oregon's forestry, fisheries, water supplies and coastal resources, with impacts that are likely to include winter flooding, summer droughts, loss of shoreline, forest fires, worsening air quality, diminished fish and wildlife habitat, retreating glaciers, decreased snowpack, and increased disease vectors and invasive species.
- E. The climate future in Multnomah County is expected to be characterized by hotter, drier summers with more high-heat days, and warmer winters with more intense rain events. Oregon's mean annual temperature is projected to increase up to 8.2°F by the 2080s (compared to the 1970-1999 average) if no action is taken.
- F. The entire community will be impacted by climate change, but communities that already face existing socioeconomic and health inequities will be most severely impacted by these risks, including children, older adults, people of color, and people in poverty.

- G. Efforts to protect public health, reduce poverty and help the community thrive all contribute to a more climate resilient community. Existing inequities in Multnomah County leave our communities less resilient to climate change and must be addressed as a critical part of reducing carbon emissions. Therefore, it is important to make investments to increase resiliency that account for the added risks created by inequities in the community.
- H. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, in a study published in 2018 showed that to limit planetary warming to 1.5°C, global human-caused carbon emissions must decline by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 reaching net zero by 2050, with negative carbon emissions thereafter.
- I. Energy used in residential and commercial buildings generates nearly half of all carbon emissions in Multnomah County. These emissions derive from on-site combustion of fossil fuels, mainly fossil gas, and emissions from electricity use on-site that is generated using coal and fossil gas. Combustion of fossil fuels for use in transportation generates the majority of the remaining carbon emissions in the County.
- J. Multiple credible studies have demonstrated that achieving deep decarbonization of the United States energy system is possible and can be done while maintaining historical levels of spending on energy. These studies identify similar strategies: energy efficiency, end-use electrification, and electricity system decarbonization. Pursuing all three strategies simultaneously is necessary to achieve needed emissions reduction targets.
- K. Studies also show that there are low-carbon technologies that can reduce carbon emissions from the fossil gas system, which the County can use in existing buildings, in combination with energy efficiency and other measures to accelerate decarbonization efforts
- L. In Resolution 2015-076 the Multnomah County Board committed to a suite of carbon reduction and climate preparation actions in the Joint Multnomah County and City of Portland 2015 Climate Action Plan, and in Resolution 2017-046 further established a goal of powering our community with 100 percent renewable energy by 2050. These policies, along with other efforts, resulted in a reduction of community-wide carbon emissions 19% below 1990 levels (as of 2018), and a per capita reduction of 42% over the same time period.

- M. In Resolution 08-004, the Multnomah County Board committed to achieving industry leading energy efficiency and environmental standards for all major construction and renovation projects, and maintaining existing buildings to similar standards. This policy, along with other efforts, has resulted in County facilities that are overall 12% more efficient in 2020 compared to a 2007 baseline, and all recent new construction projects achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification.
- N. According to the County's FY 2020 Resource Conservation Report, carbon emissions from County Buildings have decreased by 65% from the FY 2007 baseline year. The majority of emissions reductions were achieved through the purchase of renewable electricity. The largest remaining source of emissions is the combustion of fossil gas at County facilities. The second largest remaining source of emissions is the use of transportation fuels.
- O. To meet the scientifically agreed upon targets for carbon reduction the County must eliminate remaining carbon emissions by 2050, which requires actions today to avoid long-term County investments in dedicated fossil fuel infrastructure.
- P. County investments in dedicated fossil fuel infrastructure are not consistent with the County's climate goals.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

- 1. To affirm that it is County policy to oppose the use of fossil fuels in new building projects.
- 2. To support the Chair when updating the Multnomah County LEED Gold and High Performance Green Building Policy to exclude the use of fossil fuels in all new building projects and major renovations.
- 3. To support the Chair when updating the Multnomah County LEED Gold and High Performance Green Building Policy to include the social cost of carbon when calculating cost effectiveness.
- 4. To support the Chair in directing the Department of County Assets and the Office of Sustainability to develop and implement an electric vehicle strategy for all County sites.
- 5. To support the Chair in directing the Department of County Assets to implement cost effective clean energy technologies at County facilities, and to work with

energy providers to reduce the use of fossil fuels at existing buildings through efficiency and the replacement in part or in whole with less or non-emitting renewable or low-carbon alternatives.

ADOPTED this 22nd day of April, 2021.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Deborah Kafoury, Chair

REVIEWED:
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 
Katherine Thomas, Assistant County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: John Wasiutynski, Director, Office of Sustainability