

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2017-046**

Affirming Multnomah County's Commitment to Meeting Community-Wide Energy Needs in Multnomah County with 100 Percent Renewable Energy by 2050.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:**

- a. The scientific consensus is clear that human activities are primarily responsible for the warming that is accelerating global climate change.
- b. Globally, 16 of the 17 hottest years on record have occurred this century, with 2016 being the hottest year ever recorded.
- c. Changes in Oregon's climate are already being felt. Oregon's mean temperature has warmed by 2.2°F per century during 1895–2015, and 2015 is 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, 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 by up to 10.7°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. Powering our community with 100 percent renewable energy by 2050 supports the greenhouse gas reduction commitments in the Joint Multnomah County and City of Portland 2015 Climate Action Plan, adopted by County Resolution 2015-076.
- i. The two sectors producing the largest amounts of greenhouse gases in Multnomah County are transportation and residential and commercial buildings.

- j. The transportation sector accounts for 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County, and significant reductions in emissions from transportation are essential to achieving the City and County's climate-protection goals.
- k. Prioritizing investments in infrastructure for safe walking and bicycling improves community health and well being, and encourages the least carbon intensive modes of transportation including public transit.
- l. Expanding public transit service to all neighborhoods, and especially to low income neighborhoods that are currently underserved, will result not only in significant greenhouse gas reductions but also cleaner neighborhood air and improved access to employment opportunities.
- m. The transportation sector is the largest source of air toxics in Multnomah County and electrifying car, truck and bus fleets will dramatically improve air quality and public health in Multnomah County communities.
- n. It is imperative that energy consumers and the utilities serving them take early action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions given the accelerating rate of climate change that the planet is experiencing. Shifting to electricity powered by 100 percent renewable sources by 2035 is within reach by combining renewable power generation with energy efficiency, energy storage, and demand management.
- o. The construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure or expanded reliance on fossil fuels in utility resource mixes adversely impacts a renewable energy powered future and creates financial risks to customers because of the potential for stranded assets.
- p. Achieving the County's climate goals will require action at all levels: individual and community, local and state government, businesses and utilities.
- q. The County's first preference for meeting increasing energy needs remains energy efficiency. Energy efficiency gains through strengthened building codes and existing building retrofits, prioritizing low-income households, are critical to achieving the County's climate goals.
- r. The clean energy transition presents tremendous economic opportunities. The solar energy sector already accounts for 375,000 jobs nationally and 7,000 jobs in Oregon, and the energy efficiency sector accounts for over 2,000,000 jobs nationally and nearly 42,000 jobs in Oregon.
- s. "Renewable energy" includes energy derived from wind, solar, existing and new low-impact hydroelectric, geothermal, renewable natural gas (biogas), and ocean/wave technology sources. These sources of energy can have significant public health and other co-benefits that can help address pressing ecological and environmental justice challenges in sensitive ecosystems and communities in Multnomah County, the State of Oregon, and around the country.
- t. "Renewable energy" specifically excludes energy derived from fossil fuels, nuclear, biomass feedstock sourced from lands owned by the federal or state government, and incineration of municipal and medical waste. Forest biomass energy projects require special consideration to ensure that ecosystem health is not harmed, that the project

does not result in increased life-cycle carbon emissions, and that air quality is not degraded.

- u. It is important to the County that renewable energy be sustainable, both in terms of the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, human health, and in the promotion of racial, economic, and environmental justice. Therefore reliance on existing hydroelectric power requires special consideration to reduce negative ecological impacts to biological systems dependent on the affected watersheds.
- v. Low income communities and communities of color have historically been left out of environmental and climate policy discussions despite being disproportionately negatively impacted by climate change.
- w. Access to the financial and environmental benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy must be shared equitably across all economic classes, and this can be achieved through such mechanisms as community based development of renewable energy infrastructure, equitable pricing structures that protect low income ratepayers, community solar programs with low-income carve-outs, and leadership by non-profit organizations.
- x. The benefits of affordability programs can ease energy costs for low-income households, prevent low-income ratepayers from facing utility shut-offs, and thus mitigate the impacts of price spikes and the cost of implementing renewable programs.
- y. Distributed solar energy paired with energy storage is an important strategy to build disaster resilience into our communities, and will assist with disaster recovery. Ensuring equitable distribution of these resources is imperative to adequately preparing for a disaster.
- z. A clean energy transition is an opportunity to redress historical inequities in our community and must be just.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:**

1. To establish a goal to meet 100 percent of community-wide energy needs in Multnomah County with renewable energy by 2050.
2. To establish a goal to meet 100 percent of community-wide electricity needs in Multnomah County with renewable energy by 2035.
3. To have 100 percent of electricity used at County facilities supplied from renewable energy sources by 2018 through a combination of on-site renewable electricity generation, utility-supplied renewables, dedicated off-site renewable resources, and renewable energy credit purchases (REC). The County will prioritize on-site and dedicated renewable resources over the purchase of RECs, with the goal of reducing the reliance on RECs over time.
4. To prioritize community-based development of renewable energy infrastructure, and set a target of supplying 2% of community-wide energy needs via such infrastructure by 2035.

5. To pursue additional policies and partnerships to include low-income residents in the economic, social, and environmental benefits to be derived from the clean energy transition by partnering with community-facing organizations to build their capacity to lead the development of community-based energy infrastructure and mitigate negative impacts such as involuntary displacement.
6. To prioritize recruitment from within communities of color and women that have traditionally been underrepresented in renewable energy and energy efficiency fields, and in the workforce needed to implement a successful renewable energy transition.
7. To partner with energy utilities and community-based organizations to reduce the cost-burden for low-income customers.
8. To partner with Oregon tribes and native communities, communities of color, and low-income communities to address environmental, economic, and social inequities.
9. To partner with utilities to accelerate the transition to renewable energy and minimize dependence on fossil fuels, expressing the County's preferences for resources consistent with its renewable energy goals and opposition to any new fossil fuel powered project.
10. To urge utilities to maximize energy efficiency, demand control technologies, energy storage, and clean and renewable energy and avoid any new commitments to ownership of or long-term contracts for electricity derived from fossil-fuel power plants.
11. To collaborate with TriMet and other public and community partners to significantly expand public transit access, especially in neighborhoods currently underserved by transit, reduce fares for low-income residents, and complete a rapid transition to an all electric bus fleet.
12. To work with Metro, the City of Portland and the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee to prioritize investments in active and public transportation infrastructure.
13. To urge the State of Oregon to adopt codes and standards to increase the efficiency and flexibility of buildings, appliances, and devices; and to align building code efficiency standards over time with the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals; and to urge the State of Oregon to adopt a similar 100 percent renewable energy goal.
14. To oppose the rollback of climate policy at the federal level and affirm its ongoing commitment to the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement, including the goal of meeting the County's proportionate share of greenhouse gas reductions for the United States under the Paris Climate Agreement.
15. To support efforts to incorporate strategies to achieve the 100 percent renewable energy goals into the next update to the Climate Action Plan.

16. To request the Office of Sustainability to report to the County Board of Commissioners every two years on progress toward the goals established in this resolution, taking care to consult with stakeholders in this transition process, including but not limited to: communities of color, low-income communities, young people, older adults, Oregon tribes and native communities, and utilities.

**ADOPTED this 1st day of June, 2017.**

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON



*Deborah Kafoury*

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Deborah Kafoury, Chair

REVIEWED:  
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FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By *Katherine Thomas*  
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