SENATE RESOLUTION

DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND REQUESTING STATEWIDE COLLABORATION TOWARD AN IMMEDIATE JUST TRANSITION AND EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION EFFORT TO RESTORE A SAFE CLIMATE.

WHEREAS, global warming has now raised the average global air temperature about one degree Celsius, and scientists have documented that this extra heat is already having a dramatic impact on the environment, as demonstrated through larger and stronger hurricanes, increased drought and flooding, shifting rain patterns, more and larger wildfires, a hotter and more acidic ocean, and damaged ecosystems, both marine and terrestrial, across the planet; and

WHEREAS, in April 2016, world leaders recognized the urgent need to combat climate change by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep global warming "well below 2°C (3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels" and to "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C (2.7°F)"; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, over fifteen thousand scientists published a "Warning to Humanity", declaring that greenhouse gases produced from human activities have "pushed Earth's ecosystems to their breaking point"; and

WHEREAS, 13,784 scientists from one hundred fifty-six countries have signed a declaration, unequivocally affirming that "planet Earth is facing a climate emergency" and it will now take "an immense increase of scale in endeavors to conserve our biosphere" to avoid untold suffering; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reports indicate that warming is likely to accelerate in the next decade and reach 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2030 - ten years earlier than projected by the 2014 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and two degrees Celsius by 2045; and
WHEREAS, based upon the scientific information and expertise available, Hawaii remains particularly vulnerable to the dangers of disaster occurrences as a result of the effects of global warming, thereby endangering the health, safety, and welfare of the people, warranting preemptive and protective action; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii State Constitution adopts the public trust doctrine for the benefit of the people and the right of each person to a clean and healthful environment; and

WHEREAS, as of January 26, 2021, 1,864 jurisdictions in thirty-three countries have already declared a climate emergency; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, that this body acknowledges that an existential climate emergency threatens humanity and the natural world, declares a climate emergency, and requests statewide collaboration toward an immediate just transition and emergency mobilization effort to restore a safe climate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that entities statewide are requested to pursue these climate mitigation and adaptation efforts and mobilize at the necessary scale and speed:

(1) A statewide commitment to a just transition toward a decarbonized economy that invests in and ensures clean energy, quality jobs, and a statewide commitment to a climate emergency mobilization effort to reverse the climate crisis, which, with appropriate financial and regulatory assistance from state authorities, will transform the economy at emergency speed to zero emissions and meet the emission targets as set forth by the IPCC report to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius;

(2) A prohibition against any further public or private investment or subsidies in projects that will make the climate emergency worse, such as coal, oil, gas, and tree-burning projects, and redirecting and channeling
subsidies toward low climate impact energy projects
and workforce retraining;

(3) Facilitation of investments in beneficial projects and
infrastructure such as zero emissions energy; electric
vehicles, including clean fleet transitions for the
State and counties; energy efficiency; reforestation;
afforestation; climate-smart agriculture; and climate-
friendly land use; and

(4) Organization and tracking of a time-phased
implementation plan that assigns state government
agencies' responsibilities and timetables;
establishment of task dependencies between departments
with a priority to plan and coordinate, at a statewide
level, all climate and resilience responses, including
emergency mitigation of climate change effects,
resilience, adaptation, engagement, education,
advocacy, and research and development programs, all
of which begin with a robust climate emergency public
education and stakeholder outreach process; and
requirements of all departmental reports that utilize
a lifecycle greenhouse gas analysis to include a
climate impacts section, which will provide meaningful
information on how proposed actions will impact
greenhouse gas reduction efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that public and private entities are
urged to commit to statewide action that is rooted in equity,
self-determination, culture, tradition, and the belief that
people locally and around the world have the right to clean,
healthy, and adequate air, water, land, food, education, and
shelter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that nothing in this measure
constitutes a declaration of an emergency for purposes of any
act authorizing the exercise of any special or extraordinary
power during the period of a state emergency or other type of
declared emergency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Attorney General;
Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; Director of the Office of Planning; and mayors of the City and County of Honolulu and counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui.