

A Student Initiated Resolution Concerning Declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergency

Whereas, Dover Town Meeting recognizes that we are in a Climate and Ecological Emergency that threatens our town, state, nation and all of humanity;

And Whereas, Dover Town Meeting believes that a mobilization to meet this challenge is imperative to stabilize the climate, remedy environmental harms which disproportionately hurt environmental justice communities, create clean-energy jobs, and improve human lives;

And Whereas, in recent years, the Town of Dover has demonstrated a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting our environment by: becoming a Green Community in 2017, replacing all street lights with LEDs, replacing all interior lights in Town Buildings with LEDs, replacing the HVAC systems in the Protective Services Building (Police and Fire Station) with heat pumps, and designating the Town's closed landfill as a potential site for a solar photovoltaic facility.

And Whereas, Town Meeting recommends that Dover join over 2,000 governments globally that have declared a climate emergency, an emergency primarily driven by human activities, most significantly the burning of fossil fuels and the destruction of forests and other carbon sinks, resulting in rising global temperatures and loss of biodiversity.

And Whereas, a warming planet poses serious risks to human health, and safety and economic security, as evidenced by recent extreme weather events including droughts, forest fires, and floods, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, soil erosion, and mass species extinctions around the globe. Massachusetts is already experiencing flooding from storms and rising sea levels, droughts, increased transmission of tick-borne illnesses, record breaking heat waves, loss of biodiversity, such as bird and pollinator populations, and recognizing that measures to address this climate emergency can lead to an overall lower cost for energy, provide greater and better employment and better local environmental quality and justice.

Be It Resolved, that this day, in recognition of the urgent need to mobilize, Dover's Town Meeting goes on record as recommending that the Town of Dover, acting through the Select Board, declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency. Once declared, Town Meeting recommends that the Select Board consider taking further action including:

- The Town Administrator shall be responsible for communicating to all town departments, businesses, and homeowners the critical need to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as is fiscally and technologically possible;
- The Select Board shall ensure that the appropriate department or committee will develop policies that protect Dover's trees, forests and open spaces because they draw carbon from the atmosphere and provide life sustaining food and shelter to many species;
- Identify, prioritize, and publish a list of projects that reduce the town's greenhouse gas emissions such as was done on the net-zero Carol Community Center through the adoption of more rigorous building codes. Examples: increasing the use of MassSave audits, education on EV cars and government rebates, the launching of solarization and heat pump programs, identification and execution of climate mitigation strategies (MVP);
- Ensuring that the town pursues an equitable and just transition to a zero-greenhouse gas future;

- To have researched and developed, by the following Annual Town Meeting, a Climate Action Plan for Dover that explains the benefits, costs, strategies and tactics of reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2030 by 50% and with an ambition of 75% from its 1990 baseline levels, in line with the Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025 and 2030, which was passed in 2021. The plan should address greenhouse gas reduction, resilience and adaptation, engagement, and education, taking into account any negative consequences of recommended actions to residents both within and beyond our town's borders.

Town Meeting calls on state and federal elected officials to initiate a Climate Emergency mobilization and provide appropriate legislative and regulatory support to municipalities to implement local climate emergency initiatives. Town Meeting requests that the Town Clerk send notice of this resolution to the Office of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Dover's state and federal legislators.