

League of Women Voters of Alaska

Climate Emergency Resolution

Adopted July 8, 2019

Whereas, the State of Alaska, as the only Arctic region in the United States, is warming at a rate 2-3 times faster than the contiguous United States, according to the U.S. Fourth National Climate Assessment;

Whereas, the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports that global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees C between 2030 and 2052, leaving Arctic areas at a higher risk than most other regions;

Whereas, Alaska is unique among the 50 states in that more than 50% of its subsurface is permafrost, which due to climate change, is thawing with serious impacts on health, diet, surface water, air quality, shore erosion, and infrastructure, according to the Climate Assessment (Berman M, Eerkes-Medrano L, et al. Ch. 26: Alaska Region, 2018).

Whereas, the Climate Assessment warns that Alaska's marine ecosystems and wildlife habitats are experiencing the growing effects of climate warming through ocean acidification and thinning sea ice; conditions that adversely affect sea mammal food sources, fisheries, and aquaculture;

Whereas, the Climate Assessment warns that the effects of climate change likely will affect all aspects of Alaska Native society, ranging from traditional foodstuffs to the effects of thawing permafrost in the form of erosion at rates as high as 83 feet per year, requiring the removal or relocation of entire villages;

Whereas, the Climate Assessment estimates that the costs of infrastructure fixes from 2008-2030 will equal from \$3.6-6.1 billion and the wildfire repression costs will run an additional \$25 million more a year;

Whereas, the Alaska Department of Public Health (Jan. 2018) identified the groups most vulnerable to climate change to include people with low incomes, children and pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with preexisting or chronic medical conditions as those most likely to suffer from disease, food insecurity as traditional food sources become limited, and emotional illness triggered by sudden changes in lifestyles;

Whereas, the Climate Action of Alaska Leadership Team issued its initial findings to the Alaska governor in September 2018, calling for a decrease in greenhouse gases ranging from 30-33% by 2030;

Whereas, the Climate Action of Alaska Leadership Team recommended increased support for climate research and education as well as incentives for energy efficiency, renewable energy, de-carbonization, and diversified growth within established as well as emerging economic sectors;

Whereas, while Alaska is seeing the effects of climate change from the front lines, Alaskans realize that this is a global issue that requires cooperative effort on a global scale;

Whereas, individuals, communities, and governments must continue to address this issue, while considering the ramification of their decisions, at all levels—local, state, regional, national, and global;

Therefore, be it resolved that the League of Women Voters of Alaska urges the state and local communities within Alaska to take immediate action to focus on the seriousness of climate change and the steps that can be taken to help ameliorate this global crisis.