

PROPOSED BY: _____

INTRODUCED: _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Adopting the 2021 Whatcom County Climate Action Plan

WHEREAS, the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 6th Assessment report found that climate change is already affecting nearly every part of the planet, human activities are unequivocally the cause, net zero emissions is required by mid-century to avert very costly and damaging climate impacts; and

WHEREAS, our 2017 greenhouse gas assessment (Whatcom County Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2017) showed that Whatcom County has a per capita greenhouse gas emission that is almost three times Washington state's per capita emissions; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County's employment and economy are seriously threatened by climate change and the required energy transition and the County must be proactive in developing and attracting the clean energy jobs of the future; and

WHEREAS, The Whatcom County Council, through Ordinance No. 2017-080, has charged the Climate Impact Advisory Committee with the task of updating the County's Climate Action Plan every 5 years; and

WHEREAS, The Climate Impact Advisory Committee completed a Community Outreach effort in 2019, conducting over one hundred interviews with community stakeholders to determine strategies and actions needed in the updated Climate Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, members of the Climate Impact Advisory Committee 1) continued to seek advice from community experts over this last year and a half, 2) incorporated the latest climate science specific to Whatcom County (Whatcom County Climate Action Plan: Summary of Observed Trends and Projected Climate), and 3) followed recommendations from the Washington 2021 State Energy Strategy and sought advice and review from the authors of this plan; and

WHEREAS, the revised Whatcom County Climate Action Plan incorporates the climate targets passed by the 2020 State Legislature and is consistent with state and federal climate mitigation and adaptation approaches, thereby facilitating Whatcom County's ability to compete for state and federal grants; and

WHEREAS, as instructed by the County Council, the Climate Action Plan incorporates adaptation strategies and actions, that combined with greenhouse gas emissions reductions, will build climate resilience to avoid the worst impacts of rising temperatures on our economy, environment, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Action Plan acknowledges that low-income, BIPOC, and vulnerable communities within the County have and will continue to bear disproportionate impacts of climate change and that a just transition to a low-carbon future will require public investments that promote equity; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Action Plan acknowledges Whatcom County's obligation to honor and uphold tribal treaty rights, as guaranteed by the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott

between the United States government and the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Indian Tribe.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council to commit Whatcom County leadership to:

1. Establish the Office of Climate Action with dedicated staff to ensure climate action that is transparent, equitable, urgent, and accountable to the Whatcom community.
2. Acknowledge, protect, and enhance the people’s right to clean air, water, land, and food, and access to education, jobs, and shelter; and
3. Execute the 2021 Whatcom Climate Action Plan and work diligently to prioritize and incorporate key strategies and actions; and
4. Ensure that the County actions are rooted in equity and respect for the cultures and traditions of our diverse population; and
5. Act with urgency and intention to address the climate emergency and build climate resilience.

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 20__.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Approved Via Email-CQ/AK
Civil Deputy Prosecutor