

Council Resolution to Join the FCM–ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) Partners for Climate Protection Program

WHEREAS it is well established that climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme weather events and posing other risks, such as drought, forest fires and rising sea levels, which present serious threats to our natural environment, our health, our jobs and our economy;

WHEREAS the 2016 Paris Agreement, signed by more than 190 countries, including Canada, committed to limit the global temperature increase to below two degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit this increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, in order to avoid the most severe climate change impacts;

WHEREAS local governments are essential to the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement;

WHEREAS Canada's cities and communities influence approximately 50 per cent of national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and can drive systemic low-carbon practices, including: building high-efficiency buildings, undertaking building retrofits and developing district heating; building active transit, electric vehicle infrastructure and electrified public transit; implementing near-zero GHG waste plans; and delivering high-efficiency water and wastewater services;

WHEREAS investments in these types of measures also reduce operating costs, help municipalities maintain and plan for future community services, protect public health, support sustainable community development, increase community resilience and reduce a community's vulnerability to environmental, economic and social stresses;

WHEREAS a number of government and international and national organizations have called for greater cooperation among all stakeholders to meet reduction targets, including Canada's Big City Mayors' Caucus, which supports binding GHG emission reduction targets at the international, national and city levels, action plans that cut emissions, identification of risks and mitigation solutions, and regular municipal GHG emissions reporting;

WHEREAS the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)** and **ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability** have established the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program to provide a forum for municipal governments to share their knowledge and experience with other municipal governments on how to reduce GHG emissions;

WHEREAS over 300 municipal governments across Canada representing more than 65 per cent of the population have already committed to reducing corporate and community GHG emissions through the PCP program since its inception in 1994;

WHEREAS PCP members commit to adopt a community GHG reduction target of 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, in line with the Government of Canada's target, and to adopt a corporate GHG reduction target that is similar or more ambitious, and to consider adopting a deeper community and corporate emissions reduction target of 80 per cent by 2050;

WHEREAS the PCP program is based on a five-milestone framework that involves completing a GHG inventory and forecast, setting a GHG reduction target, developing a local action plan, implementing the plan, and monitoring progress and reporting results;



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SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says in its 2014 *Fifth Assessment Report* that warming of the Earth's climate system is unequivocal and that "the IPCC is now 95 per cent certain that humans are the main cause of current global warming."

The IPCC concludes this warming is caused primarily by increased atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide released from burning coal, oil and natural gas and from cutting trees and clearing land for agriculture and development.

The IPCC has a high degree of confidence that the following climate-related impacts are occurring or will occur over the next century in North America:

- More frequent hot and fewer cold temperature extremes, resulting in longer and more frequent heat waves.
- More frequent and intense extreme precipitation events.
- Thawing of permafrost, causing greater emissions of greenhouse gases and leading to disruptions to infrastructure and the traditional ways of life in northern communities.
- Melting of glaciers and polar ice, causing sea level rise in over 70 per cent of coastal communities.
- Increased risk of extinction for a large fraction of terrestrial, freshwater and marine species, undermining food security in many regions.
- In urban areas, increase risks for people, assets, economies and ecosystems including risks from heat stress, storms and extreme precipitation, flooding, landslides, air pollution, drought, water scarcity, sea level rise and storm surges.
- In rural areas, impacts on water availability and supply, food security, infrastructure, and agricultural incomes, including shifts in food production areas.

Under business-as-usual scenarios, the IPCC has high confidence that global surface temperature is likely to exceed two degrees Celsius by the end of the 21st Century.

The IPCC observes that warming resulting from human influences could lead to abrupt or irreversible impacts, depending on the rate and magnitude of climate change, and that the more human activities disrupt the climate, the greater the risks.

Under a stringent emission reduction scenario, the IPCC concludes that surface warming could be kept under two degrees Celsius, which would reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.