

Climate Smart Community Pledge For The County Of Ulster

Legislator Laura Petit and Co-Sponsors: The Governmental Services and Administration Committee (Chairman Roberts and Legislators Belfiglio, Fabiano, Ronk, Robert Parete, Madsen and Rodriguez) offer the following:

WHEREAS, Ulster County understands that climate change poses a real and increasing threat to our local and global environments and is primarily exacerbated by the current burning of fossil fuels, and

WHEREAS, Ulster County is desirous of investigating methods to address and reduce such threats, and

WHEREAS, it is believed the scale of greenhouse gas (hereinafter referred to as “GHG”) emissions reductions required for climate stabilization will require sustained and substantial efforts and that even if emissions were dramatically reduced today, communities would still be required to adapt to the effects of climate change for decades to come, and

WHEREAS, Ulster County’s timely response to climate change provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to save money, and to build livable, energy-independent and secure communities, vibrant innovative economies, healthy and safe schools, and resilient infrastructures, and

WHEREAS, Ulster County has established itself as an energy and environmental leader through policies, resolutions and local law including those establishing the County as an Energy Smart Community, requiring the purchase of renewable energy, establishing energy efficient building standards, establishing a County Government Energy Policy, and other resolutions regarding energy conscious and green purchasing, and

WHEREAS, there exists opportunities to take a comprehensive approach to implement policies and programs at the County government level to further reduce GHG emissions, increase energy efficiencies, promote local job growth, increase economic activity and resiliency, improve quality of life, and promote social justice, and

WHEREAS, Ulster County has a long-standing interest in attracting and retaining innovative businesses and is in a position to serve as an example for surrounding municipalities and all of New York State by setting a precedent for reducing GHG emissions, and

WHEREAS, the Towns of New Paltz, Rosendale and Saugerties, the Village of New Paltz and the City of Kingston have already set the bar as leaders in adopting the Climate Smart and Green Jobs Community Pledge, and

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WHEREAS, the effects of climate change will significantly impact infrastructure, economy and livelihoods, disrupt ecological communities, spread invasive species and exotic diseases, negatively impact drinking water supplies and stormwater and sewer treatment infrastructure, and pose health threats to our citizens, and

WHEREAS, the “green economy” of clean and efficient energy systems, high performance buildings, clean and efficient transportation, and healthy materials and products, is an arena of emerging interest in New York State with job growth and training opportunities already emerging through the area’s solar, wind, geothermal and energy services companies, as well as other dynamic sectors, and

WHEREAS, Ulster County can lead by making a commitment to climate change which will contribute substantially to other community objectives and competitively position the County for funding through New York State Energy Research Development Authority (hereinafter referred to as NYSERDA), Energy-Efficiency Block Grants, and other applicable future federal grant opportunities, such as the pending American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, reducing energy cost and improving operational efficiency of aging infrastructure will lower Ulster County’s government operating cost and save taxpayer dollars, and in addition to lowering infrastructure and service costs, community-wide climate protection will also help to maintain property values by making communities desirable and attractive to new residents, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Ulster County shall strive to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to a changing climate, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Global Warming Advisory Committee established by Resolution No. 139, dated April 11, 2007, be reformed as the Climate Smart Committee and designated to review and make recommendations on climate change and green jobs initiatives, publicly present an annual report on its findings and work cooperatively with similar task forces and organizations within Ulster County and in neighboring communities to ensure that efforts complement and reinforce one another.

The Climate Smart Committee shall be charged with investigating the following and making recommendations to the Ulster County Legislature regarding same:

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1. Pledge to combat climate change by becoming a Climate Smart Community

Set goals, both short term and long term, to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to predicted climatic changes. Work cooperatively with similar municipal task forces in Ulster County to ensure that efforts complement and reinforce one another.

2. Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Move to Action

Gather data, inventory GHG emissions, and establish baselines for County government operations. Encourage stakeholder and public input and develop an action plan.

3. Decrease Energy Demand for County Government Operations

Work with County agencies, who will educate the public, in order to adopt and meet a goal of reducing electricity use by 10 percent from projected levels by or before 2014.

A. Existing Public Facilities. Use the comprehensive investment grade energy audit of County buildings (completed in 2010) to identify opportunities for conservation and efficiency retrofits. Purchase energy efficient equipment and appliances to meet current ENERGY STAR standards, improve lighting, heating, and cooling efficiency, set thermostats for maximum energy conservation, decrease plug load from office equipment, and increase pump efficiency in water and wastewater systems.

B. New Public Buildings. Ensure that Resolution No. 383 dated November 8, 2006, "Establishing High Performance Green Building Standards For County Of Ulster New Construction Projects," is followed.

C. Infrastructure. Incorporate energy efficient technologies and operations and maintenance practices as per the Ulster County Government Energy Policy Implementation Guidebook. Suggest new technologies and practices for future inclusion into the Implementation Guidebook.

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D. Vehicle Fleet and Commuting. Improve the average fuel efficiency of County government fleet vehicles. Discourage vehicle idling and encourage bicycling, car-pooling, and public transit for employees. Ensure that Resolution No. 229, dated July 8, 2009, "Establishing A Pedestrian And Bicycle Policy," is followed. Consider non-motorized transportation routes on County roads such as bike lanes. Consider reducing the number of vehicles, converting fleet vehicles to sustainable alternative fuels, and using electric vehicles where possible. Establish a tele-commuting policy for County employees, where appropriate.

4. Encourage Renewable Energy for County Government Operations

Supply as many of the local government's power, heat, and hot water needs as possible from solar, wind, and small hydro through purchase or direct generation as outlined in the new State goal of reducing energy use by 80% by 2050. The County currently purchases ten (10) percent of its total energy from renewable wind resources. Support the increase of renewable purchases and look for ways to support local renewable energy sources.

5. Realize Benefits of Recycling and Other Climate Smart Solid Waste Management Practices

Expand the "reduce, reuse, recycle" approach to waste management in local government operations and in the whole community. Reduce the amount of solid waste generated—promote backyard composting, implement volume-based pricing and educate residents on how to prevent waste. Promote reuse and provide a space for drop-off or trade of reusable goods. Expand the availability of recycling receptacles in local government buildings and outdoor spaces, require duplex printing in government offices, compost food scraps and green waste, and adopt a comprehensive green purchasing program incorporating green clean supplies (Resolution No. 262, adopted October 19, 2010) and recycled paper (Resolution No. 159, adopted June 21, 2011).

6. Promote Climate Protection Through Community Land Use Planning

Combat climate change by encouraging low-emissions development that is resilient to climatic changes. When updating land use policies, building codes or community plans, include provisions to combat climate change; reduce sprawl, preserve and protect open space, biodiversity, and water supplies; promote compact, transit-

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oriented, bikeable and walkable communities; promote infill development, minimize new development in floodplains; maintain or establish healthy community forests; and promote best forest management practices and encourage tree planting, especially along waterways and streets, to increase shading and to absorb carbon dioxide. Use the authority of the County's Planning Board to assure that new development projects reflect the community's desires for viable ecosystems and low carbon footprints.

7. Plan for Adaptation to Unavoidable Climate Change

Evaluate risks from unavoidable climate change, set adaptation goals and plan for adaptation. Identify climate change impacts (such as flooding, drought, and extreme temperatures) that could affect County government operations and the broader community. Identify areas such as County supported water supply and sewer infrastructures that may be at risk due to increased intensity of rainfall, turbidity and sedimentation, increased flash floods and increased droughts in late summer, sea-level rise, and other future changes in climate. Factor risks into long-term investments and decision-making. Execute climate change adaptation and preparedness measures through County government planning, development, and operation, giving priority to the highest risk areas.

8. Green Innovation Strategy

Identify opportunities to incorporate climate protection, sustainability and environmental goods and service industries into economic development plans. Encourage workforce development training and school curricula that support the emerging green collar job sector, including renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as climate smart solid waste management practices. Procure climate smart goods and services for local government operations and support modernizing of local and national electricity grids.

9. Inform and Inspire the Public

Lead by example. Highlight local government commitment to reducing energy use, saving tax dollars, and adapting to changing conditions. Demonstrate the benefits of energy savings, energy efficiency, and renewable energy projects by communicating community climate goals and progress to constituents through various means including "open house," public forums, workshops//charrettes and use of the County website on energy savings: www.SustainableUlster.org.

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10. Commit to an Evolving Process

Acknowledge that research and policy on climate protection are constantly improving and evolving. Be willing to consider new ideas and commit to update plans and policies as needed. Compare successes, cooperate and collaborate with neighboring communities to redirect less effective actions and amplify positive results.

11. Renewable Return on Investment

Continue to actively support and implement the financing framework for continuous energy performance improvements established in the adopted Ulster County Government Energy Policy. New energy efficiency measures should be funded in part with funds derived from utility savings. The Climate Smart Communities Committee will further promote and implement energy efficiency improvements by seeking to establish consideration of renewable energy across County government, including both procurement and operations, and to explore additional ways to implement energy reduction and renewable energy technologies,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 24

NOES: 6

(NOES: Legislators Bernardo, Hansut, Harris,
Hayes, Roberts and Ronk)

(Absent: Legislators Felicello, Frey and Richard
Parete)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE

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STATE OF NEW YORK

ss:

COUNTY OF ULSTER

This is to certify that I, the undersigned Clerk of the Legislature of the County of Ulster have compared the foregoing resolution with the original resolution now on file in the office of said clerk, and which was adopted by said Legislature on the 16th day of August, 2011, and that the same is a true and correct transcript of said resolution and of the whole thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the County of Ulster this 19th Day of August in the year Two Thousand and Eleven.

/s/ Karen L. Binder
Karen L. Binder, Clerk
Ulster County Legislature

Submitted to the County Executive this

19th Day of August, 2011.

/s/ Karen L. Binder
Karen L. Binder, Clerk
Ulster County Legislature

Approved by the County Executive this

25th Day of August, 2011.

/s/ Michael P. Hein
Michael P. Hein, County Executive