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## **LEGISLATION**

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### **RESOLUTION DECLARING CLIMATE EMERGENCY.**

WHEREAS, on April 22, 2016, 174 countries and the European Union signed the Paris Climate Agreement, recognizing the threat of climate change and agreeing to pursue efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2018 the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected that limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius will require unprecedented transitions in all aspects of society over the next 12 years; and

WHEREAS, over 700 governmental jurisdictions across the world have recently declared or officially acknowledged the existence of a global climate emergency; and

WHEREAS, the impacts and risks of the climate crisis include increased and intensifying extreme weather events; and

WHEREAS, NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies reported global temperatures in 2018 were .83 degrees Celsius warmer than the average temperature between 1951 and 1980, and the past five years are collectively the warmest in modern history; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2019 more than 70 health organizations including the American Medical Association and the American Public Health Association declared climate change to be a health emergency and issued a call to action for government, business, and civil society leaders to recognize climate change as a health emergency; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 global pandemic has both highlighted and exacerbated existing health inequalities that have resulted from climate change, such as neighborhoods with poorer air quality being disproportionately affected by the disease; and

WHEREAS, marginalized and frontline populations in New Rochelle and worldwide, including people of color, immigrants, Indigenous communities, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, outdoor laborers, and the unhoused, especially women and children, are already disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change, and will continue to bear an excess burden as temperatures increase, and disasters worsen; and

WHEREAS, a sweeping transition to clean energy systems that centers on equity and justice in their solutions is vital to our future and must include the expansion of clean and

renewable power sources; residential and industrial building upgrades for state-of-the art energy efficiency, comfort and safety; investments in community resilience; investments in local-scale agriculture; improvement in critical transportation, water and other infrastructure, and

WHEREAS, a just and equitable transition requires that frontline and marginalized communities, which have historically borne the brunt of the extractive fossil-fuel economy, participate actively in the planning and implementation of this mobilization effort and that they benefit first from the transition to a climate-safe economy; and

WHEREAS, a fair shift away from a dependency on fossil fuels to an economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable and just for all its members will support local businesses and prepare frontline communities for meaningful, family-supporting work in the carbon-free economy; and

WHEREAS, the massive scope and scale of action necessary to stabilize the climate and biosphere will require unprecedented levels of public awareness, engagement, and deliberation to develop and implement effective, just, and equitable policies to address the climate emergency; and

WHEREAS, on July 18, 2019, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed into law the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act). New York State's Climate Act is the among the most ambitious climate laws in the world and requires New York to reduce economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030 and no less than 85 percent by 2050 from 1990 levels; achieve 100% zero-emission electricity by 2040 and statewide carbon neutrality by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Act requires that equity and justice be at the forefront of the State's just transition, and requires that a goal of 40% of all climate investments, and no less than 35% of all climate investments, benefit the State's disadvantaged communities; and

WHEREAS, the City of New Rochelle embraces the mandates of the Climate Act and has been at the forefront of sustainability and environmental policy and can be a leader in emergency climate action by building a climate-resilient and adaptive city for all residents; and

WHEREAS, in 2011 the New Rochelle City Council adopted *GreenNR: The New Rochelle Sustainability Plan* that sets out a twenty-year plan toward achieving critical objectives by 2030; and

WHEREAS, the New Rochelle City Council created two advisory committees to advance the goals, evaluation and update of the GreenNR Plan and increase public participation in climate and energy programs, the Ecology & Natural Resources Advisory Committee and the Energy Conservation Committee; and

WHEREAS, New Rochelle's ongoing transit-oriented economic development is fully consistent with and supportive of a climate action strategy that reduces car-dependency, expands mobility options, and cuts energy requirements for the heating and cooling of dwelling units; and

WHEREAS, New Rochelle was among the initial participants in Westchester Power, a community choice aggregation program, spearheaded by Sustainable Westchester, that provides green energy to local electricity consumers; and

WHEREAS, New Rochelle's ten-year capital budget includes significant new investments in natural resources, including enhancement of local parks, open spaces, and water bodies; and

WHEREAS, the New Rochelle City Council created the position of Sustainability Coordinator to oversee a community-wide mobilization effort, implement and monitor New Rochelle climate and environmental programs including the evaluation of the existing GreeNR twenty year plan, coordinate sustainability initiatives with other municipal departments and partner organizations, and update the actions and strategies necessary to implement climate emergency response, including climate mitigation, resilience, adaptation, engagement, education, advocacy, and research and development programs; and

WHEREAS, climate justice calls for climate resilience planning that addresses the specific experiences, vulnerabilities, and needs of marginalized communities within New Rochelle, who must be included and supported in actively engaging in climate resilience planning, policy, and actions; and

WHEREAS, building a climate-resilient and adaptive society will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents, and will offer protections from the adverse potential consequences of climate change to New Rochelle's ecosystems and economies; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of New Rochelle, that the New Rochelle City Council declares a climate emergency and calls for an immediate emergency mobilization to restore a safe climate; and be it further

RESOLVED, the City of New Rochelle recognizes this global and national challenge and sees opportunity for local action to address the climate emergency, while also promoting equity, opportunity, and justice for all residents, businesses, and workers in our community; and be it further

RESOLVED, the City of New Rochelle commits to keeping the concerns of frontline and marginalized communities central to all sustainability program planning processes and to inviting and encouraging such communities to actively participate in the development and implementation of all climate mobilization efforts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to determine an accountability and regular reporting structure to the City Council on the GreeNR Plan and overarching climate change goals and mobilization efforts. The City Manager is also directed to provide clarity on leadership responsibilities for climate change goals within the City Administration organizational structure; identify proposed budget items that might have a significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions; and identify areas where additional resources could make new or existing greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts more successful; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to establish, with the advice and consent of the City Council, a City Task Force on Climate and Equity (Task Force). The purpose of the Task Force is to engage frontline community members and advocates, promote interdepartmental coordination and make recommendations on how to address the ongoing climate crisis, ensure New Rochelle meets the obligations set forth in the Climate Act, GreenNR and other climate goals in ways that mitigate racial and economic inequity through the creation of local “green” jobs, urban agriculture, green infrastructure and other projects; and be it further

RESOLVED, as part of the upcoming update to the GreeNR Plan, the City Manager or his designee is directed to provide options for more aggressive interim targets to accelerate the reduction pathway to achieve the goals outlined in New York State’s Climate Act; consider a range of high-impact clean energy actions, to include but not be limited to: adopting the NYS Unified Solar Permit, purchasing 100% renewal electricity, adopting the NYStretch Energy Code, adopting a benchmarking policy to track and report the energy use of municipal buildings and launching a Community Solar Community Campaign; examine other objectives related to greenhouse gas emissions reduction and identify the feasibility of accelerating the timelines of achieving such objectives; develop in consultation with the Ecology & Natural Resources Advisory Committee and the Energy Conservation Committee and present to City Council recommendations for a comprehensive communications plan and community awareness campaign that will help the City meet its climate change goals and implement the GreeNR plan. The community awareness campaign plan should identify all resources, budget, and schedule necessary for successful implementation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to incorporate climate resilience policies during the planned updates of the Downtown Overlay Zone and any other City plans with climate impacts (to ensure climate change and resiliency efforts are strong, effective, and aligned). The City Manager is also directed to examine existing City plans to identify those that may be outdated; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to identify innovative policy approaches to address the climate crisis’s causes as well as mitigation strategies, including the promotion of natural systems, green infrastructure, and carbon sequestration; public cooling

spaces to combat heat waves; and updated information about the heat island effect in New Rochelle and strategies to mitigate this effect; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to develop a plan to implement the Green Infrastructure Initiative Program outlined in the Mott MacDonald Green Infrastructure 2018 Report. The City Manager is directed to identify strategies to minimize declines in the City's existing tree canopy and create a smart tree planting system; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to promote inter-departmental coordination to ensure that existing emergency management plans offer an aligned approach to the threats of the climate crisis and natural hazards and to identify where planning gaps may exist; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to identify strategies for ensuring the provision of shelter and other life-sustaining essentials to low-to-moderate income residents in the event of a significant disruption or dislocation caused by climate emergencies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to collaborate with the County Office of Emergency Management and participate in the development of a County-wide Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, as recommended in the United Westchester August 2020 Storm Response Report; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Manager or his designee is directed to present to City Council a plan for implementation of this resolution at the time of submission of the FY2022 Budget, with a timetable and associated costs in connection therewith.