



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the General Assembly

FROM: Maximilian Katz, Vice President, Graduate Student Organization, Stony Brook University.

DATE: April 11, 2015

SUBJECT: A Resolution to Demand Action on Climate Change

Resolution

I recommend that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNYSA) adopt the following resolution:

Whereas, an overwhelming majority¹ of credentialed scientists, in the United States and abroad, support the finding that climate change is happening and that human activities are a key contributor, and;

Whereas, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the U.K. Royal Society have stated², “It is now more certain than ever, based on many lines of evidence, that humans are changing Earth’s climate. The atmosphere and oceans have warmed, accompanied by sea-level rise, a strong decline in Arctic sea ice, and other climate-related changes,” and;

Whereas, the 2014 National Climate Assessment³, reviewed extensively by the National Academy of Sciences, states that in the Northeast “Heat waves, coastal flooding, and river flooding will pose a growing challenge to the region’s environmental, social, and economic systems. This will increase the vulnerability of the region’s residents, especially its most disadvantaged populations,” and;

Whereas, the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review⁴ by the U.S. Department of Defense states that the effects of climate change are “threat multipliers

1 [Quantifying the consensus on anthropogenic global warming in the scientific literature](#)

2 [Climate Change: Evidence & Causes](#)

3 [National Climate Assessment](#)

4 [Climate Change and National Security in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review](#)

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that will aggravate stressors abroad such as poverty, environmental degradation, political instability, and social tensions – conditions that can enable terrorist activity and other forms of violence,” and;

Whereas, the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined⁵ that “Impacts from recent climate-related extremes, such as heat waves, droughts, floods, cyclones, and wildfires, reveal significant vulnerability and exposure of some ecosystems and many human systems to current climate variability ... All aspects of food security are potentially affected by climate change, including food access, utilization, and price stability,” and;

Whereas, New York State has recently been struck by major storms such as Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy that have inflicted significant economic damage, and hurricanes of this magnitude are likely⁶ to be significantly more common in coming decades due to global warming, and;

Whereas, if left unaddressed, the consequences of climate change will adversely impact all Americans, hitting the most vulnerable populations – children, the elderly, the sick, and the poor – hardest, and saddling future generations with the costly burden of a damaged planet, and;

Whereas, New York State Executive Order No. 24⁷ “set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in New York State by 80 percent below the levels emitted in 1990 by the year 2050,” and;

Whereas, the Union of Concerned Scientists has called for⁸ “government and corporate decision makers to reduce the threat of global warming by:

- Expanding the use of **renewable energy** and transforming our energy system to one that is cleaner and **less dependent on coal and other fossil fuels**,
- Increasing **vehicle fuel efficiency** and supporting other solutions that **reduce U.S. oil use**,

5 [Climate Change 2014 Summary for Policymakers: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability](#)

6 [Global Warming and Hurricanes](#)

7 [Climate Action Planning](#)

8 [Global Warming 101](#)

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- **Placing limits** on the amount of carbon that polluters are allowed to emit,
- **Building a clean energy economy** by investing in efficient energy technologies, industries, and approaches,

and;

Whereas, as students we are the current role models and future leaders of our society and must call for action when it is needed; and **therefore be it:**

Resolved, that the SUNY Student Assembly demands that the State of New York, the United States Congress, and the President of the United States of America take significant and timely action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avert the most serious damage from climate change; and, finally be it

Resolved, that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York shall forward copies of this Resolution to President Barack H. Obama, Congressman Lee Zeldin, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Lt. Governor Kathleen C. Hochul, the members of the New York State Legislature, the SUNY Board of Trustees, SUNY Chancellor Zimpher, University Faculty Senate, Faculty Council of Community Colleges, SUNY Campus Presidents, SUNY student governing bodies, and all other parties deemed necessary and proper.