User Guide for Climate Emergency Resolution Template - September 2020

This guide is intended for use by Sierra Club Chapters or Groups that choose to use the template resolution to declare a Climate Emergency. This document explains what a Climate Emergency Resolution is and how to adapt this template for your use.

What is a Climate Emergency Resolution?
A Climate Emergency Resolution
- Is drafted by a sponsoring body (in this case, a Sierra Club or Group) acknowledging that the current climate crisis warrants characterization as an emergency.
- Recognizes that current efforts on global, national and local levels to address the climate crisis are insufficient.
- Outlines commitments the sponsoring body will take to address the climate emergency.

How Does a Chapter or Group Use This Template?
This template has been written to be as broadly applicable as possible. For this reason, it is succinct, focusing on the most important, essential components of a climate emergency declaration. It can be adopted in its current form with only minor modification or it can be more extensively adapted to local issues and Chapter or Chapter priorities.

The WHEREAS Statements
The WHEREAS statements incorporate information from numerous sources, including the October 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, scientific journals, and the position of the Sierra Club as voiced by Executive Director Michael Brune and as described in detail in its *Climate Resilience, Carbon Dioxide Removal, and Geoengineering Policy* document. These WHEREAS statements satisfy the first two defining criteria noted above, and provide basic context and a solid foundation for the RESOLVED statements that follow.

It is possible to add locally focused whereas statements. Keep in mind, however, that statements that are too locally focused may reduce the utility of the resolution in garnering widespread support and engaging with a broad coalition of allied organizations.

The RESOLVED Statements
The RESOLVED statements are the commitments to action that the Chapter or Group will take to address our climate emergency. The template’s RESOLVED statements are the minimum “essential” components of a meaningful resolution. They move the resolution beyond symbolism
and demonstrate a willingness to recognize that a genuine emergency exists and action is required.

The first of the RESOLVED statements is the **acknowledgement** that our current situation is, indeed, a climate emergency and it is a global threat.

The second RESOLVED statement builds on the clear **leadership** and respect accorded to the Sierra Club in preserving our environment.

The third resolved statement **encourages all levels of society to take responsibility** for lowering emissions of climate pollutants and for protecting the environment which, in turn, protects us. Reducing emissions of climate pollutants and protecting habitat resonates with the Sierra Club’s core values.

The fourth RESOLVED statement **conveys commitment** to the idea that we are “**powerful together**” and that no one will be left behind in our pursuit of climate and environmental justice.

The fifth RESOLVED statement **commits the Chapter or Group to help build a movement** to address climate disruption by working with members and other activists locally and regionally. Linking our individual and Chapter or Group efforts through coalition work with climate allies can help build and sustain a movement calling for immediate, sustained, and comprehensive climate actions. We are powerful together and joining our voices with others **demonstrates our common commitment to movement building and transformative climate action.** Nearly every Sierra Club Chapter is already working on climate issues and this commitment to movement building can facilitate success for the Chapter and the Club.

The last RESOLVED statement is about **walking our talk.** With a commitment to a critical evaluation of our own operations, we can make a real difference that also **demonstrates the importance of action.** In a time of emergency, all actions are important and how we conduct our own business is directly within the realm of our own decision-making and control. **Using a “climate lens” to evaluate Chapter or Group operations is a good example of how to step away from “business as usual” and shift to an emergency mode of thinking and action.**

**Possible Benefits of Chapter or Group Declaration of Climate Emergency**

- Builds a grassroots response that energizes activists and helps grow a movement.
- Demonstrates support for all local activists calling for bold climate actions. This can be important whether the goal is supporting coalition allies or attracting support for Chapter or Group climate initiatives.
- Supports recruitment of new volunteers or members. This can be especially meaningful for youth who are deeply concerned and passionate about climate and who are looking for an organizational home. It can have the additional benefit of re-energizing existing volunteers while adding capacity to old and new climate related programs.
- Strengthens messaging on climate as the Chapter or Group engages with new coalition members, works with long-standing coalition allies, or engages with elected officials.

**Completing the Resolution**

As noted above, this template can be tailored to Chapter or Group unique issues. If and when the template is modified, please be sure to retain the template’s essential “RESOLVED” statements. Retaining these minimum commitments helps ensure the greatest benefit: it stimulates action within your Chapter or Group and joins your voice to that of other Sierra Club entities to help build a movement calling for bold action and transformative change.

Also keep in mind that modification of the resolution to respond to local issues can be helpful but can also inadvertently reduce the utility when trying to build broad coalitions of climate activists.

Lastly, after approving a Climate Emergency resolution (or if you have already passed a climate emergency resolution), please email a copy to our GN Climate Emergency Mobilization Team or post a note (with your resolution attached) to our GN-CEM-DISCUSSION listserv.

Thank you so much,
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