

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 646

Introduced by Pansing Brooks, 28; Brewer, 43; Ebke, 32; Hansen, 26;
Kolowski, 31; Kuehn, 38; McCollister, 20; Morfeld, 46;
Stinner, 48; Vargas, 7; Wishart, 27.

Read first time January 18, 2017

Committee:

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to extreme weather preparedness; to require
- 2 development of a strategic action plan; to state findings; to
- 3 provide for a task force and require submission of a plan.
- 4 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. The Legislature finds that:

2 (1) Pests, drought, floods, high winds, and other extreme weather
3 present serious, diverse, and ongoing issues for Nebraska. Many sectors
4 and resources are impacted by such extreme weather, including
5 agriculture, water, health care, energy generation and usage, ecosystems,
6 forestry, rural and urban communities, transportation, and commerce and
7 industry. Nebraska's life-giving water and soil resources continue to be
8 subject to new stressors and risks;

9 (2) Opportunities exist for the people of Nebraska to respond
10 appropriately to these risks, including economic opportunities through
11 development of renewable energy from our abundant wind and solar
12 resources, reduction of pollutants through efforts to reduce the use of
13 fossil fuels, and development of new technologies, new agricultural crops
14 and harvesting methods, and new products that match Nebraska's vibrant
15 and changing needs and resources;

16 (3) The report Understanding and Assessing Climate Change:
17 Implications for Nebraska, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2014, provides
18 a fundamental basis for understanding the impacts of extreme weather
19 events or climate change for our state;

20 (4) The 2015 Nebraska Rural Poll found that sixty-one percent of
21 rural Nebraskans agree or strongly agree that the state should develop a
22 plan to address the impacts of extreme weather events or climate change;

23 (5) Appropriate planning is needed to develop strategies to mitigate
24 and adapt to the impacts of extreme weather events or climate change on
25 the health and well-being of Nebraskans;

26 (6) The state must invest in research and data gathering, planning,
27 education, and coordination of efforts related to mitigation of and
28 adaptation to the impacts of extreme weather events or climate change;
29 and

30 (7) An effective plan to meet the challenges of extreme weather
31 events or climate change will enable the state and its communities to

1 take advantage of opportunities resulting from adaptation and mitigation
2 strategies, including attracting new businesses and investment to
3 Nebraska, as well as reducing the potential negative impacts of extreme
4 weather events or climate change.

5 Sec. 2. The Legislature shall provide for the creation of an
6 evidence-based, data-driven strategic action plan for the State of
7 Nebraska related to the pests, drought, floods, high winds, impacts of
8 extreme weather events or climate change on Nebraskans that includes:

9 (1) A baseline measurement of greenhouse gas emissions, also known
10 as a carbon footprint, for the State of Nebraska;

11 (2) Measurable benchmarks and goals, including actions needed to
12 meet the goals and benchmarks;

13 (3) Assessment of risks and vulnerabilities from negative impacts of
14 extreme weather events or climate change;

15 (4) Opportunities presented by strategies for mitigation of and
16 adaptation to extreme weather events or climate change;

17 (5) Opportunities to improve and increase resilience to the impacts
18 of extreme weather events or climate change;

19 (6) Potential economic impacts of extreme weather events or climate
20 change, both positive and negative;

21 (7) Examination of impacts of extreme weather events or climate
22 change upon the following sectors:

23 (a) Agriculture;

24 (b) Water resources;

25 (c) Health care and public health;

26 (d) Energy generation and use;

27 (e) Ecosystems and forestry;

28 (f) Rural and urban communities;

29 (g) Transportation; and

30 (h) Commerce and industry; and

31 (8) Recommendations for new policies and changes to policies and

1 programs that support the goals based on the information and data
2 collected and generated, including funding needs and recommendations for
3 legislation.

4 Sec. 3. The Pests, Drought, Flood, and Extreme Weather Mitigation
5 and Preparedness Plan Task Force is created. The task force shall consist
6 of the chairperson of the Natural Resources Committee of the Legislature,
7 the chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature, and
8 five additional members of the Legislature appointed by the Executive
9 Board of the Legislative Council. The task force shall develop the
10 strategic action plan described in section 2 of this act. The process for
11 developing the plan shall include:

12 (1) Extensive opportunities for public comment and engagement,
13 including, but not limited to, online input, public hearings, and public
14 and private sector engagement;

15 (2) Input from postsecondary educational institutions in Nebraska,
16 including, but not limited to, input from entomological climate, water,
17 and agricultural experts at the University of Nebraska;

18 (3) Examination of extreme weather preparedness or climate plans
19 from other states; and

20 (4) Such other and additional activities as may be necessary.

21 Sec. 4. On or before December 15, 2017, the Pests, Drought, Flood,
22 and Extreme Weather Mitigation and Preparedness Task Force shall submit
23 the strategic action plan described in section 2 of this act to the
24 Governor and electronically to the Executive Board of the Legislative
25 Council.