

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 294

Introduced by Kolowski, 31; Bolz, 29; Brandt, 32; Cavanaugh, 6; Chambers, 11; Crawford, 45; Hunt, 8; McCollister, 20; Morfeld, 46; Pansing Brooks, 28; Quick, 35; Wishart, 27.

WHEREAS, according to a warning published on November 5, 2019, about the effects of climate change, signed and supported by over eleven thousand scientists, the climate crisis "is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity." Later on in the statement the scientists wrote that "climate change reactions could cause significant disruptions to ecosystems, society, and economies, potentially making large areas of Earth uninhabitable" and that because of the climate crisis, humanity could face "untold suffering"; and

WHEREAS, the United States Environmental Protection Agency states that intense weather phenomena, including large storms and heat waves, are likely to occur more frequently because of the climate and ecological crisis. Major storms can lead to loss of property and both storms and heat waves can cause death; and

WHEREAS, the Fourth National Climate Assessment says that over time these heat waves increase drought and wildfire risks. Heat waves and droughts have depleted water supplies, which has contributed to over ten billion dollars in losses for the agriculture sector; and

WHEREAS, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, many forests are burning because of changes in temperature, precipitation levels, and soil moisture due to global warming. Hotter temperatures in the spring and summer, and the fact that snow is melting earlier in the spring, are likely to cause a longer wildfire season and cause wildfires to be more intense and burn for longer; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information, which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, there

were eleven major wildfires between 2000 and 2017 in the United States of America. In that eighteen-year period, both the number of deaths and the financial damage caused by each wildfire dramatically increased. In the first wildfire of 2000, no one died, and the cost was \$1.6 billion. In the last wildfire of 2017, fifty-four people died, and the cost was \$18.7 billion; and

WHEREAS, the Fourth National Climate Assessment also states that flooding might increase across the United States of America, including in areas where precipitation is expected to decrease. All flood types, including flash flooding, urban flooding, river flooding, and coastal flooding are, to different degrees, affected by the climate. The risks from future floods are very major; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, sea levels are rising at a rate of about one-eighth of an inch per year. The two major causes of rising global sea levels are oceanic expansions due to the warming of oceans and increased melting of glaciers and ice sheets. The oceans are absorbing about ninety percent of the increased atmospheric heat that results from human emissions. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration goes on to state that "with continued ocean and atmospheric warming, sea levels will likely rise for many centuries at rates higher than that of the current century"; and

WHEREAS, higher sea levels cause deadly and destructive storm surges to push farther inland, which means there will be more nuisance flooding, which is estimated to be three hundred to nine hundred percent more frequent in United States coastal communities than it was fifty years ago. Nearly forty percent of the United States' population lives in such coastal communities. Eight out of the ten largest cities in the world are close to a coast according to the U.N. Atlas of the Oceans; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2014 report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, animals have an increased risk of extinction because of the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, a report done by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln concluded

that disruptions in the climate have decreased agricultural yields in Nebraska over the last forty years and are predicted to decrease agricultural yields significantly over the next twenty-five years; and

WHEREAS, the State of Nebraska has contributed to the climate crisis but has done little to nothing to slow the effects.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Legislature acknowledges that we are in the midst of an anthropogenic climate and ecological crisis.
2. That the Legislature has a moral obligation to take steps to combat the climate and ecological crisis.
3. That a copy of this resolution be sent to Prairie Hill Learning Center.