

State of Vermont House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 7

Joint resolution relating to sustainability

Offered by: Representatives McCormack of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, Ryerson of Randolph, and Stuart of Brattleboro

Whereas, the word sustainable is widely used to argue in favor of specific policies and is broadly seen as a guiding concept in discussions of multiple aspects of modern life, but users of this term rarely define it thoroughly, and

Whereas, “sustainable,” as defined comprehensively, means that persons living in a politically or geographically defined area: (1) do not live beyond the limits of the local renewable resources for either input (energy and matter) or output (food, material goods, and absorption of pollution); (2) purchase or trade from environmentally conscious sources for those necessities that cannot be locally satisfied; and (3) live both in numbers and in a manner that allows present and future generations of all life in that area to exist in a healthy habitat, and

Whereas, Vermont and the world are facing enormous and potentially catastrophic environmental challenges including: extreme weather events resulting from global warming’s greenhouse gas emissions; the loss of a variety of wildlife species; the depletion of natural resources; unmitigated sprawl and elimination of arable land; food scarcity and rising food prices owing to droughts at major food origination sources; and forest fragmentation and decline in the forest cover, and

Whereas, the United Nations projects that, by the year 2050, four billion persons will be residing in nations it defines as water-stressed, a massive increase from the mere one-half billion persons living in these countries as recently as 1995, and

Whereas, according to the respected *Scientific American*, since 1961, in a global context, the per capita acreage of crop land has declined more than fifty percent, and more than 900 million persons now have an inadequate food supply, and

Whereas, conducting all human activity in a sustainable manner is critical for the maintenance of the earth’s habitability and the achievement of a sustainable world population, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly urges all government agencies, enterprises, institutions of higher learning, and nongovernmental organizations in Vermont that have sustainability as part of their mission or programs to adopt this resolution's definition of "sustainable" and to implement policies and actions to achieve true sustainability, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly urges the U.S. Agency for International Development and other federal international development programs to adopt the goal of developing nations achieving sustainable population sizes, such as programs that enfranchise women, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Rajiv Shah, and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.