



**TAOS COUNTY
RESOLUTION NO. 2019-49**

**A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY,
AND REQUESTING REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON AN
IMMEDIATE JUST TRANSITION PLAN AND EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION
EFFORT TO RESTORE A SAFE CLIMATE**

WHEREAS, in April 2016 world leaders from 175 countries recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep warming “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C”; and

WHEREAS, the death and destruction already wrought by global warming of approximately 1°C demonstrate that the Earth is already too hot for safety and justice as attested by increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, rising seas, diseases, droughts and extreme weather; and

WHEREAS, climate change and the global economy’s overshoot of ecological limits are driving the sixth mass extinction of species, which could severely alter much of the life on Earth; and

WHEREAS, the Taos County is located in an ecologically fragile high plains, semi-arid environment where minute changes in temperature, precipitation, water quality, stream levels, water tables and other climatic and environmental conditions can have dramatic impacts on wildlife, agriculture, the economy, tourism and the quality of life in our region; and

WHEREAS, it is evident that global environmental factors such as air pollution, global climate change and increased ocean temperatures can produce dramatic immediate and long-term impacts on Taos because of our geographic sensitivity to the impacts of El Nino and our critical winter snowpack and summer monsoons; and

WHEREAS, the connection between weather, climate, environment and our ability and that of many species to survive in the Four Corners has been clearly demonstrated repeatedly during the hundreds-year drought during the years 700-800 A.D when a drought brought the decline of the flourishing Anasazi civilization, bringing the Puebloan culture to Taos, and as recent as the 1920's and 30's when the Great Dust Bowl devastated agriculture and the economy, and the 1950s - 1980s drought , fueled wildfires, from which some of our native species and habitats have never recovered; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency and US Forest Service have confirmed that our community will be facing shorter winters, shallower snow packs that will melt quicker, more frequent record breaking droughts and heat waves, more violent and extreme weather changes, and forest fires that will burn hotter and cover greater areas due to lower moisture content in the vegetation, disease from bark beetles, root funguses and other invasive species that are able to prey on the forests due to susceptibility due to drought and climate changes;

WHEREAS, the cumulative effect of such high temperature fires sterilizing seeds and the soil combined with the lack of sufficient precipitation to regrow mature habitats, will likely mean the permanent and irretrievable loss of much of the habitat we now know in the southwest, such as Aspen, Ponderosa Pine and Pinon forests, such as we are now seeing from the Concha fire and the scars on our own hillsides and

WHEREAS, the Taos Valley has always been known as an epicenter of environmental creativity, innovation and sustainability, from the Taos Pueblo, a World Heritage Site and one of the oldest continually-inhabited structures in the world, to our adobe churches and homes, the world's largest open space building spanned with vigas, our earthships and acequia networks; and

WHEREAS, using renewable energy, conservation and environmentally-friendly technologies, identifying and recommitting to some of our historic environmentally supportive practices of our past, like our acequias, not only facilitates the preservation of the environment, but can result in increased cost-effectiveness by government, economic independence for our community and new, meaningful and well-paying jobs for local residents; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America, by disproportionately contributing to the climate and ecological crises and has often failed to participate in global efforts to transition toward a sustainable economy, and thus bears a responsibility to rapidly solve these crises; and

WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate requires an emergency mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors at wartime speed, to rapidly and safely drawdown or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and to implement measures to protect all people and species from the consequences of abrupt climate change; and

WHEREAS, the term “Just Transition” is a framework for a fair shift to an economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable and just for all its members; and

WHEREAS, just transition initiatives shift the economy from dirty energy to energy democracy, from funding highways to expanding public transit, from incinerators and landfills to zero waste, from industrial food systems to food sovereignty, from car-dependent sprawl and unbridled growth to smart urban development without displacement, and from rampant, destructive over-development to habitat and ecosystem restoration; and

WHEREAS, justice requires that frontline communities, which have historically borne the brunt of the extractive fossil-fuel economy and will be most adversely affected by climate change, participate actively in the planning and implementation of this mobilization effort at all levels of government and that they benefit first from the transition to a renewable energy economy; and

WHEREAS, Taos County can act as a global leader by both converting to an ecologically, socially, and economically regenerative economy at emergency speed, and by catalyzing a unified regional just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort this year; and

WHEREAS, Taos County Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution 2018-57 in support of the Paris Agreement committing to exploring the potential benefits of adopting policies and programs that promote the long-term goal of greenhouse gas emissions reduction while maximizing economic and social co-benefits of such action; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Taos County, hereby:

1. Declares that a climate emergency threatens our region, state, nation, civilization, humanity, and the natural world;
2. Joins other counties and cities of the United States in support of the youth led Global Climate Strike on Friday, September 20, 2019;
3. Commits to a countywide just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort to expeditiously reduce countywide greenhouse gas emissions; to adapt resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying climate impacts; and to provide maximum protection for County residents as well as all the people and species of the world;
4. Commits to the continued education of County residents about the climate emergency;
5. Underscores the need for full community participation in addressing the climate emergency, including the residents of Taos County and all community organizations and institutions that tend to needs of faith, youth, labor, business, education, homeowners, environment, economy, race, gender, family, disability, indigenous, immigrant, and women, and who will be integral to and in the leadership of the mobilization effort;
6. Commits to keeping the concerns of vulnerable communities central to the just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort planning processes and to inviting and encouraging such communities to actively participate in order to advocate directly for their needs;
7. Joins a nation-wide call for a regional just transition and climate emergency mobilization collaborative effort focused on transforming our region and rapidly catalyzing a mobilization at all levels of government to restore a safe climate; and
8. Calls on the State of New Mexico, the United States of America, and all governments and peoples worldwide to declare a climate emergency; and to initiate a just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort to reverse global warming by rapidly phasing out fossil fuels and the technologies which rely upon them; ends greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible; initiates an effort to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere; transitions to regenerative agriculture; limits the sixth mass extinction; and creates high-quality, good-paying jobs for those who will be impacted by this transition.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED ON THIS 17th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2019

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF TAOS COUNTY**

Mark Gallegos, Chairman

Candyce O'Donnell, Commissioner

Gabriel Romero, Commissioner

Tom Blankenhorn, Commissioner

VOTE RECORD:

M. Gallegos	yes	no	abstain	absent
C. O'Donnell	yes	no	abstain	absent
J. Fambro	yes	no	abstain	absent
T. Blankenhorn	yes	no	abstain	absent
G. J. Romero	yes	no	abstain	absent

Jim Fambro, Commissioner

Attest:

Anna Martinez, Taos County Clerk

Approved as to legal form:

Randy Autio, Taos County Legal Counsel