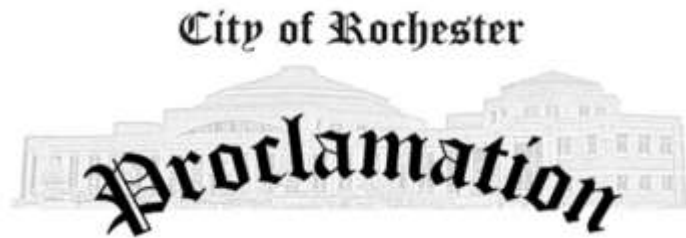


City of Rochester



Proclamation

WHEREAS, this past year Rochester, Minnesota experienced numerous climate change related impacts including a record June heat wave, dangerous air quality from drought-fueled forest fires where even healthy people were encouraged to remain inside, and water restrictions from the same drought, making it clear that the climate crisis is not only a future issue — it is affecting us here and now; and

WHEREAS, extreme weather will create new challenges for Rochester’s infrastructure and finances and will pose a threat to the economic vitality of our residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the greatest burden from an inadequate response to the climate crisis will be felt by historically marginalized or underserved communities as well as the youngest generation, including the children and grandchildren of Rochester; and

WHEREAS, in Minnesota, the ten warmest and wettest years ever recorded have all occurred since 1998, warming surface waters are leading to a significant loss of fish habitat for many prominent species as well as increasing the risk of harmful algae blooms, forests are changing as native northern species are strained by warming temperatures, crops are stressed by cycles of drought and floods, home insurance rates are rising far faster than the national average from an average of \$368 in 1998 to \$1348 in 2015, and faster warming winters are leading to new pests as well as shorter winter recreation seasons; and

WHEREAS, the bi-partisan Next Generation Energy Act, passed by the Minnesota State Legislature and signed by then Governor Tim Pawlenty in 2007, committed our State to achieving to an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 and with interim goals of 15% and 30% below 2005 GHG emissions levels by 2015 and 2025, respectively, with cities being key drivers of achieving these goals; and

WHEREAS, our State did not meet its 2015 goal, and is not yet on track to reach our future targets; and

WHEREAS, in April 2016 world leaders from 175 countries, including the United States, recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius”; and

WHEREAS, we have already reached a temperature increase of nearly 1.1 degrees Celsius (nearly 2 degrees Fahrenheit) as compared to pre-industrial times and the death and destruction already wrought by this level of global warming demonstrate that the Earth is already too hot for a safe, just, and healthy life for many around the world, as attested by increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, rising seas, diseases, droughts, and extreme weather; and

WHEREAS, in August 2021 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body responsible for assessing the science related to climate change, released a report that stated, “It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere and land,” and that “Human influence has warmed the climate at a rate that is unprecedented in at least the last 2000 years,” and “with every additional increment of global warming, changes in extremes continue to become larger”; and

WHEREAS, recent scientific research indicates that to achieve the goal of limiting temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, carbon emissions must be halved by 2030 and reach net zero global emissions by 2050; and

WHEREAS, a transition to a clean energy economy, if not carefully planned, would have a disruptive impact on the livelihoods of many in our community while a well-planned transition may provide expanded job opportunities for local residents; and

WHEREAS, Rochester’s strategic priorities include commitments to being a leader in racial equity and inclusion in order to create a more just and inclusive community for all and in environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, 2,012 jurisdictions in 34 countries including Minnesota leaders Duluth, Minneapolis, and Crystal Bay Township, have already declared climate emergencies in order to focus attention on the need for rapid action to address climate change.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Kim Norton, Mayor of the City of Rochester, Minnesota, do hereby declare that climate change is a threat to our city, region, state, nation, humanity and the natural world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that I, as Mayor, commit to working for a just energy transition and climate mobilization and encourage the City Council, area businesses, non-profits, and the entire community join this effort in response to the continued evidence of negative climate impacts and ask everyone to commit to working to:

- Implement a range of innovative projects, programs, and public awareness campaigns for businesses and residents throughout 2022 and beyond, including around solar energy, energy efficiency, natural resources, and more.
- Collaborate with surrounding cities and local partners to identify larger, regional sustainability projects, and when applicable, work together to pursue state and federal climate action funding for those projects.
- Support the counties and cities across the state joining this call to action to meet regularly, share ideas, and align goals to continue advocating for state and federal legislation.
- Use all available tools to ensure that urgent climate action in Rochester is equitable and just, including but not limited to consideration of inclusive involvement and engagement, policy and program design, populations and people who are more likely to benefit or be burdened, and accessible communications.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we acknowledge the past work and leadership on climate action in Rochester as well as the commend our future work with the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) to complete an analysis in 2022 of the strategies outlined in the Energy Action Plan, and our Sustainability and Resiliency Community Work Plan, as well as our adopted climate goals related to energy and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions. And that CEE will review the latest science and goals from other leading cities to recommend new goals and actions for adoption by the City of Rochester; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council, in cooperation and consultation with the administration, will discuss and implement any needed changes to our city climate related goals, commission directives, and energy action plan based on recommendations brought forward to address the urgent climate issues outlined and which the City Council will review on or around April, 2022; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that I, as Mayor, call on the Minnesota legislature and executive branch to immediately and aggressively support cities of all sizes around Minnesota to both mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, including providing funding and resources for the development and implementation of climate action plans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, I, as Mayor, call on the federal government to immediately commit resources to support the climate mitigation, adaptation and resiliency efforts of cities large and small, to invest in the infrastructure needed for a sustainable future, to ensure that investment is at the scale needed, and to provide the necessary global leadership to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), and so I join other cities, large and small, across our state calling out Climate Change as an urgent issue needing our attention and do hereby proclaim 2022 as the year for a

Climate Urgency – Call To Action

in Rochester, Minnesota and ask our community members, local governments, businesses and all who live within our borders and beyond to join in by finding ways to support the Sustainability & Resiliency Community Task Force work plan and our fulfill our Energy Goals established and/or amended by the city of Rochester.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Kim Norton, Mayor of the City of Rochester, Minnesota, have here unto set my hand and caused the corporate seal of the City of Rochester to be affixed this 19th day of January, 2022.

Kim Norton

Kim Norton, Mayor
City of Rochester, Minnesota