



UNION COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

RESOLUTION: 2020-569

JULY 23, 2020

ESTRADA, KOWALSKI, PALMIERI-MOUDED, ENTIRE BOARD

WHEREAS, Senate Bill SR57, titled "A SENATE RESOLUTION urging the Governor and the Attorney General to pursue legal action against fossil fuel companies for damages caused by climate change" was introduced in the New Jersey State Senate for the 2020 Season. As such, the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the County of Union offers its support of this Senate Resolution; and

WHEREAS, Union County is one of the most populated counties in New Jersey with 556,341 residents amongst 21 municipalities, 105 square miles of urban and suburban neighborhoods, including forests and wetlands, the Watchung Reservation and 35 other County parks and nature preserves, the Rahway and Elizabeth Rivers, and many cultural, historical and educational institutions; and

WHEREAS, Union County has been greatly impacted by flooding due to hurricanes, thunderstorms, flash flood, storm surge, and severe winter storms, and its proximity to major rivers such as the Passaic, amounting to significant costs in national flood insurance policies repetitive claims; and

WHEREAS, studies indicate New Jersey is second in the nation at risk of chronic inundation by 2045 with 62,000 properties exposed worth \$27 billion and third in the nation for highest flood insurance claims with twice the global averages for surface temperature and sea-level rise, and hurricane-force wind and flood intensity and frequency are projected to increase with estimated damages likely to increase from \$1.3 to \$3.1 billion in 2050. Further studies estimate that seawall construction alone for Union County will cost nearly \$122 million; and

WHEREAS, estimates have indicated that Hurricane Sandy caused more than \$30 billion in damage to New Jersey and destroyed 72,000 homes, with Union County ranked the fifth highest county for community hardship for power outages, residential and commercial damages; and

WHEREAS, Fossil fuel companies have known for decades of the damage burning fossil fuels creates. The over production of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere for years traps heat which then causes climate change; and

WHEREAS, Although they have known of the damage and dangers associated with their companies, fossil fuel companies continued their business model without warning consumers of the possible dangers of their products which can lead to climate change; and

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Approved as to Form:
 Certifying as to an Original Resolution:
 Certified as to a True Copy:

✓ Vote Record - Resolution RES-2020-569		Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted	Rebecca Lynne Williams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted as Amended	Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Defeated	Andrea Staten	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tabled	Angel G. Estrada	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn	Angela R. Garretson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sergio Granados	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Christopher Hudak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bette Jane Kowalski	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Alexander Mirabella	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2018 the City of New York filed a lawsuit for damages against companies that produce, market, sell and profit from the sale of fossil fuels, under public nuisance, private nuisance, and trespass claims inasmuch as fossil fuel companies, including BP, Chevron, Conoco, Phillips, Exxon Mobil, and Shell, have produced, marketed, and sold massive quantities of fossil fuels despite knowing that the combustion and use of fossil fuels emit greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide; and

WHEREAS, in October 2019, Executive Order 89 outlined a statewide resilience plan to address the state's vulnerability to severe weather events, precipitation, and wind damage that cause disastrous consequences for public health and safety^[1]; and

WHEREAS, despite their long-standing knowledge of the dangers associated with their products, fossil fuel companies produced, marketed, promoted and sold fossil fuels over the past 50 years, while failing to warn or otherwise protect consumers from these dangers and spending millions of dollars on campaigns to deceive consumers of the known causes and consequences of climate change; and

WHEREAS, several major fossil fuel companies are advocating for legislation that would give fossil fuel companies immunity from lawsuits over climate change-related costs and damages, or would restrict or eliminate the ability of states and municipalities to bring suit or assert specific causes of action that would shift the burden of climate costs from taxpayers to polluters^[1]; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders adds its strong support to this legislation and urges Union County's members of the State Senate and Assembly to add their strong support; and further, that this Board shall send copies of this resolution to our delegation to the New Jersey State Senate and General Assembly in order to show our strong support in holding fossil fuel companies responsible and accountable for damages caused by climate change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to members of the Union County delegation of the New Jersey State Legislature.