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SCR-53 Climate change. (2021-2022)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 53

CHAPTER 119

Relative to climate change.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 19, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 53, McGuire. Climate change.

This measure would declare that a climate emergency threatens the state, the nation, the planet, the natural world, and all of humanity.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, California has proven to be a leader nationally and globally in addressing climate change, in recognizing it is a reality, in adopting policies geared toward reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, and in working to slow the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, The consequences of climate change are so great that they are causing multiple crises across the globe; and

WHEREAS, In November 2019, more than 11,000 scientists from around the world declared that we are in a climate emergency; and

WHEREAS, Ninety-seven percent of scientists agree that climate change is real and human induced; and

WHEREAS, According to the United Nations, global temperatures are expected to rise as much as 5.8 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century and temperatures have risen, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1 to 2 degrees in the United States over the last 50 years; and

WHEREAS, Global emissions of greenhouse gases must begin to fall by 7.6 percent each year beginning in 2020 in order to meet the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21); and

WHEREAS, The United States has officially signed back on to the Paris Agreement and California remains committed to the agreement and working towards reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases; and

WHEREAS, Scientists have warned that the planet's warming should not exceed 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit or 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

WHEREAS, Global sea levels will rise by more than three feet and perhaps by as much as seven feet by the end of this century, inundating cities across the United States and the globe and here at home in California; and

WHEREAS, The warming and acidification of the oceans is negatively impacting marine life; and

WHEREAS, California has been profoundly affected by several natural disasters made more severe by climate change, including droughts, record-breaking wildfires, flooding, and coastal sea rise with impacts on coastal nearshore ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Climate change impacts human health, making illnesses ranging from allergies to heart and lung diseases, kidney problems, pregnancy complications, and skin cancer worse; and

WHEREAS, Marginalized communities worldwide, such as women, LGBTQIA+ communities, people of color, immigrants, indigenous communities, low-income people, those with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness, are already disproportionately affected by climate change and must benefit from a just transition to a sustainable and equitable economy; and

WHEREAS, According to a report released by the California Legislative Analyst's Office in November 2019, California's coastline could experience as much as seven feet of sea level rise by 2100, which could have extensive impacts on the state's residents, economy, and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, Over the past century, California has warmed by about 3 degrees Fahrenheit, which has led to longer and warmer summers, delayed rainfall, and created drier air and vegetation that, when fires spark, enables fire to spread more quickly and burn more intensely and longer; and

WHEREAS, The warming and acidification of marine and freshwater systems are creating the perfect conditions for harmful algal blooms to thrive, algal blooms that produce toxins, including liver and neurotoxins, that sicken humans and wildlife, and that impact drinking water sources; and

WHEREAS, Forty counties and cities in California have already successfully declared climate emergencies, as well as 1,831 governments around the world and more than 7,000 colleges and universities globally; and

WHEREAS, During the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, the State of California demonstrated a remarkable capacity to protect human health in the face of a crisis, based on early and preventative actions in response to evidence and warnings issued by scientists; and

WHEREAS, We must apply those lessons by heeding to scientific expertise and planning for the future in order to protect our communities from the similarly devastating effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, The State of California must commit to ensuring that its actions remain in alignment with the most current scientific findings regarding climate change, and do everything in its power to encourage a swift conversion to an ecologically, socially, and financially sustainable economy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature declares that the climate emergency threatens the state, the nation, the planet, the natural world, and all of humanity; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.