

Resolution to Adopt a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goal

WHEREAS: The transition to a net-zero greenhouse gas economy brings many potential benefits, including improved health, reduced pollution, the creation of tens of thousands of clean energy and energy efficiency jobs, and the ability to retain more of our energy dollars in the local economy; and

WHEREAS: Massachusetts communities are already feeling the impacts of a changing climate, with rising temperatures, increased flooding and more intense and frequent storms, and the state's centralized energy system and transit infrastructure is becoming more vulnerable to climate-related risks; and

WHEREAS: Massachusetts can generate 100% of its energy from renewable sources by harnessing the region's abundant solar, wind, water, and geothermal resources; and, by leveraging innovations in energy efficiency and storage, green transportation, and other technologies, which will enhance its resilience and energy security; and

WHEREAS: Massachusetts was one of the first states to adopt a carbon emissions reduction goal, as defined in the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act, and the Baker-Polito Administration has demonstrated leadership to mitigate and adapt to climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building a more resilient Commonwealth that safeguards residents, municipalities, and businesses (as outlined in Executive Order 569); and

WHEREAS: Local climate leadership is essential, such that 210 cities and towns across the Commonwealth have committed to reducing municipal energy use and more than 30 communities, including, but not limited to, Acton, Arlington, Ashland, Bedford, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Concord, Falmouth, Framingham, Lexington, Melrose, Medford, Newton, Quincy, Wayland, and Wellesley, have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and comprehensive, cost-effective plans to achieve these goals; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Natick has been taking action to reduce its carbon emissions, promote clean energy, and increase resiliency by participating in the Massachusetts Green Communities and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness programs, installing solar arrays on municipal buildings, earning designation as a SolSmart Gold Community by the U.S. Department of Energy, supporting private and public renewable energy installations, installing electric vehicle charging stations, greening its electricity aggregation, promoting residential and commercial energy efficiency programs, and converting to LED streetlights, among other efforts; and

WHEREAS: The Natick community, including residents, businesses and nonprofits, have demonstrated their support for renewable energy and energy efficiency, as evidenced by the participation of 130 businesses in the Eversource Small Business Energy Efficiency program, by the Town's 2016 record-breaking performance in Solarize Mass, and by the installation of 686 solar arrays with a combined capacity of more than 12 megawatts, thereby exceeding the average solar per capita in the United States; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That Natick Town Meeting supports a goal of eliminating or offsetting by 2050 all greenhouse gas emissions in Natick that originate from heating and cooling, electricity consumption, Natick-based transportation sectors, industrial processes and gas leaks. This effort will include households, businesses, the municipality, and utilities, and will involve efficiency measures, demand management, investment in energy storage and low carbon transportation infrastructure, and the replacement of fossil fuels with renewable energy sources; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Town of Natick will work to establish a baseline estimate of community-wide emissions and develop a Net Zero Action Plan that outlines specific strategies and sets measurable, attainable and realistic interim targets for achieving the 2050 net zero goal, and will provide an annual progress report to Natick Town Meeting; and be it further

RESOLVED: That in developing and implementing the Net Zero Action Plan, the voices and interests of low, fixed income and/or vulnerable members of the Natick community are considered, to ensure the benefits and related costs of a transition to a clean energy economy are shared equitably by the entire community; and be it further

RESOLVED: That Natick Town Meeting urges the Natick Legislative Delegation in the General Court and in the United States Congress to assist Natick and other cities and towns in achieving their greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and to promote further local, state, and federal action to mitigate and adapt to climate change.