

STOCKBRIDGE-MUNSEE CLIMATE CRISIS PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL—The Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Nation should join other tribal nations in declaring a climate change emergency, and put into effect a solid mission to address it. As an indigenous nation that cares for future generations, it's clear our young people are calling for immediate and sustained action on the climate crisis—it's their future—and involving the younger generations is critical to achieving success in our tribal mission to tackle the climate crisis.

SCIENCE—The Wisconsin warming trend matches the global trend. The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) predicts Wisconsin's annual average temperature is likely to warm by 4-9°F by mid-century... "the expected rate of warming is about four times greater than what we have experienced since 1950" with "more frequent storms than in the past," worsening "heat waves, air pollution and the spread of infectious diseases" (WICCI). The climate crisis will increase the risk of flooding, intensify storms and their frequency, threaten drinking water, and intensify the strain on roads and buildings. For reservation health, we cannot afford a "business as usual" approach to the climate crisis, when considering future risks and future costs.

UTILITIES—On our reservation, our use of electricity and gas is a major source of carbon dioxide emissions. We buy electricity from utilities that largely burn coal to produce it, and Liquid Petroleum gas is a fossil fuel that emits greenhouse gases. Additionally, it's vital to consider how the climate crisis may disrupt the utilities' ability to provide services to us. We've suffered multi-day electric and gas outages, and these may happen for longer periods and with greater frequency.

PLANNING—Given that individualistic responses are difficult and limited in effectiveness, real action must be taken at the tribal government level; our climate response must be considered, prioritized and put into effect as a collective group. We must deliberate on what our climate adaptation measures will be, and then integrate them into reservation-wide ordinances and related policies.

COST—We must evaluate our capacity as a tribal nation to sustain long-term adaptation to the climate crisis. We should analyze both the positive and negative financial impacts as well as the compromises we may need to enact along the way. Besides our sacrifice and investment, there may be chances for real economic growth as we work to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis.

ACTION—

- Declare a tribal climate emergency and commit to going carbon neutral by 2030 or 2050 at the very latest; make this a top priority mission and start planning ways to achieve it.
- Mobilize tribal resources to foster more climate change analysis and awareness, to create responsive action plans; the longer we wait, the more costly it will become.
- Increase the circulation of education about carbon-neutral and sustainable environments across the reservation and in all tribal programs, such as regular publication in the newspaper and community outreach. A better understanding of climate science is needed, of its impacts, and how to implement adaptation strategies on the reservation at all levels.
- Review all existing tribal programs and policies in light of climate change, giving priority to developing environmental resilience. We should mandate carbon-neutral building codes for all new construction—and adhere to them—and create clean energy goals and standards to adapt older reservation buildings.
- Our Nation should immediately partner with Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers—creating a state-to-state relationship—to address the climate crisis. This year, the Governor signed an executive order eliminating the use of carbon-based fuel in Wisconsin by 2050. The governor also created the Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy, to strive for the standards set by 2015 Paris accord on climate. The new Office is responsible for coordinating the efforts of other state agencies, local governments, utilities and businesses. It will also develop renewable energy standards for state-owned buildings and foster research and business development related to renewable energy.