

## SUPPORT THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION ARTICLE AT CHATHAM TOWN MEETING MAY 11



The Chatham Climate Action Network (“Chatham CAN”) is supporting the upcoming Article for the May 11, 2020 Town Meeting titled: ***Climate Emergency Declaration.***

This article asks the citizens of Chatham to acknowledge a climate emergency and adopt as town policy the goal of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions to zero as soon as feasible. We prepared this handout to provide information about this proposed Declaration, why we support it, and why we hope you will support it by coming to Town Meeting on May 11 and voting for it.

***Text of the Declaration:*** *The Town of Chatham recognizes that the climate emergency, driven by human activity including energy consumption and land use practices and leading to global warming, rising seas, deadly storms, dangerous heat waves, acidifying oceans, and melting ice sheets, poses a threat to the health, safety and economic security of the residents of the Town. The Town of Chatham therefore adopts as its policy the objective of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions from human activity within and by the Town to zero at the earliest technically and economically feasible time, and directs that all officers and departments of the Town take such measures within the scope of their respective responsibilities and authority as may be necessary and prudent to facilitate such policy and objective.*

### Key Points to Know:

**CAPE UNDER THREAT:** Rising seas are flooding our coasts, big storms are getting more frequent and more violent, unstoppable storm surges, tornadoes are happening right here on Cape Cod! The Cape is ground zero for some of the most severe impacts from climate change.

**THE SOLUTION IS CLEAR:** 11,000 scientists agree that climate conditions will become much worse unless we bring carbon emissions down to zero as fast as possible. Reducing emissions is a big job - we all need to be part of the solution, and the sooner we start, the better.

**WE WILL SAVE MONEY:** As renewable sources of energy get cheaper, taxpayers and residents will save money with green energy and increasing energy efficiency.

**A STRONGER ECONOMY:** Building a resilient, sustainable green economy on renewable energy and emerging no-carbon technologies creates jobs and local investment opportunities. Not acting on climate change threatens the existence of our seasonal economy.

**SAVE CAPE COD FOR OUR CHILDREN:** Our youth recognize the threat of climate change and are demanding action. We owe them a sustainable future on Cape Cod.

**NEXT: PRESENTATION OF CITIZEN PETITION AT BOARD OF SELECTMAN, MARCH 9, 6:00**  
**NEXT: CHATHAM CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK PLANNING WORKSHOP, MARCH 21, 10:00**

## **QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION**

### **Why is this an “Emergency”?**

- In 2018, the UN stated that the world has just a bit more than a decade to avert a global catastrophe brought on by climate change. Now it's less than a decade.
- Scientists use “*emergency*” to mean *risk* multiplied by *urgency*, when both factors are judged to be “acute.”
- Scientists concluded in late 2018 that we are now living in a true emergency situation. The risks of catastrophic climate change are significant and the time left to avoid them is limited. Action is urgently needed – now.

### **What is the bigger picture?**

- The article is part of a coordinated, Cape-wide effort to have each Cape Cod town declare a similar Declaration through its Spring 2020 Town Meeting warrant.
- In the Town Meeting towns, volunteers have filed citizen petitions to put the article before each Town Meeting. A similar proposal will be advanced at Barnstable Town Council.
- It is also part of a global effort in which governments across the U.S. and around the world are taking actions to declare a Climate Emergency, in response to climate change and the ecological crisis.

### **Where else has a climate emergency declaration passed?**

- The idea for a Climate Emergency Declaration was developed by grassroots activists, political leaders and organizations who see a need for a WWII-scale mobilization to address the climate crisis on the scale and in the timeframe needed.
- To date, more than 1,300 governments around the world have declared a Climate Emergency, including 78 U.S. municipalities and town and city councils like Amherst, Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts.

### **What will the climate emergency do?**

- The Article doesn't set a specific deadline or mandate a particular plan. It doesn't require spending any money. It is the voice of the citizens of Chatham, declaring that they believe that climate change is an emergency here in Chatham. It lays the foundation for advancing more concrete proposals in Chatham, with the goal of net zero emissions as the pivotal policy choice.
- The Article leaves discretion to town leaders to take the necessary and feasible actions, guided by the statement from our citizens at Town Meeting to act with a sense of climate urgency.
- This is not just a “feel-good” resolution; it is a critical first step. We believe that in telling the truth about the climate emergency, we can transform our response into personal and collective action. We can improve our focus, encourage creativity and collaboration, and take the steps necessary to confront the challenges before it is too late.