



Together we make a difference

April 19, 2019

An Open Letter to Burlington's City Council

On Tuesday, April 23rd, a motion will be brought to City Council to declare a climate emergency in Burlington similar to a motion recently [adopted by Hamilton](#). BurlingtonGreen urges Council members to give this motion their full support showing that Burlington is a true leader among municipalities. Unanimous support for this motion would be consistent with [Burlington's commitment as a Blue Dot community](#), and also with its [Strategic Plan direction of making Burlington a healthy and greener city](#).

At no time has it been more important for municipal leaders to recognize and act on a global problem. This is particularly true, given the current steps backward on climate action by the Province, and the uncertainty of federal action in light of the upcoming fall election. This makes it all the more critical for municipalities to become the champions for action.

Some may regard this as a purely symbolic gesture but the declaration goes well beyond that:

- sending a strong signal to other levels of government and the community that Burlington takes a stand on climate action
- acting as a guidepost and accountable reminder to Council to make decisions through a climate action lens
- supporting the City's goal of making City operations net carbon neutral
- recognizing publicly the urgency of action in light of the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report that we have only 11 years to sharply apply the brakes on releasing carbon for any hope of preventing runaway climate change

The consequences of climate change are already being seen and experienced in Burlington and around the province, the country, and the world. Declaring a climate emergency will support the prioritization of and investment in initiatives to reduce our local carbon footprint by among other steps:

- protecting and growing Burlington's tree canopy
- advancing green building development initiatives
- investing in fossil-fuel free public transit infrastructure
- advancing more local food production opportunities
- implementing stronger flood protection measures

The cost of taking these steps may be higher in the short term, but less costly in the long term, economically and in terms of the negative impacts on human health and the disruption to lives resulting from property damage to homes, and businesses.

Clearly, it is time to take a stand. We, therefore, urge Council to unanimously declare a climate emergency in Burlington on April 23rd fittingly right after Earth Day. Show the world that while others may fail to act, our beautiful City is ready to stand on guard for our increasingly fragile planet by proactively taking the necessary steps to protect it.

Thank you,

BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association