

TOWNSHIP OF SCOTCH PLAINS

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-107

A RESOLUTION URGING THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO HOLD FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE COSTS

WHEREAS, the Township of Scotch Plains is located in Union County, New Jersey, with almost 23,000 residents, and the Township is home to many businesses, parks, recreational facilities, schools and other institutions; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Scotch Plains and communities across the State of New Jersey are experiencing the increasingly severe impacts of climate change, including flooding and urban heat. In New Jersey, average temperatures are increasing by roughly twice the global average, with an average of 5 to 8 degrees Fahrenheit above preindustrial levels predicted by the end of the century, and 2021 as the state's third warmest year on record; and

WHEREAS, global warming causes sea-level rise and annual precipitation to accelerate in New Jersey, with sea levels projected to increase 4 to 6.3 feet by 2100 above the year 2000 mean sea level, and annual rainfall projected to increase 5 to 8% by the end of the century; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Ida is estimated to have caused \$16 to 24 billion in damages in the Northeast U.S. and 30 deaths in the state of New Jersey ; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Scotch Plains must plan for flood resilience and stormwater management. Required upgrades to New Jersey's stormwater, drinking water and wastewater infrastructure systems will cost \$40 billion over the next 20 years statewide; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Sandy caused more than \$36 billion in damages within the State of New Jersey, damaging or destroying 346,000 homes and cutting power to over 2 million households statewide; more than 10.9 billion gallons of sewage overflowed throughout the state, and the costs of cleanup and remediation are only increasing as storms become more frequent and severe; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from burning fossil fuels amounted to 76% of total human-caused greenhouse gases (GHGs) and NASA explains the "greenhouse effect" as when carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxides trap heat in the atmosphere and cause temperatures to rise, known as "global warming"; and

WHEREAS, oil and gas companies have produced, marketed, promoted, and sold fossil fuels over the last 50 years, without protecting or warning consumers about the dangers they knew their products would cause, and have spent millions of dollars on campaigns to obscure the truth to stall climate action and protect their profits; and

WHEREAS, 20 municipalities, six states, the District of Columbia, and one industry trade association have filed lawsuits against major oil and gas companies for the costs of adapting to climate damages those companies knowingly caused, and/or for defrauding consumers as to the risks those companies knew their products would cause; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of Scotch Plains, County of Union, State of New Jersey, do hereby urge Governor Murphy to take legal action against the fossil fuel industry for their role in creating and perpetuating the climate crisis to ensure that the cost of adaptation and resilience does not fall solely on the shoulders of taxpayers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution shall be forwarded to our representatives in Congress, the members of the New Jersey General Assembly and the State Senate, the Lieutenant Governor, the Governor of the State of New Jersey, and to the Attorney General of the State of New Jersey.

Dated: June 21, 2022