

## **A RESOLUTION OF THE JACKSON COUNTY DEMOCRATS**

Resolution No. 2020-3

### **To Encourage the State of Oregon to Declare a Climate Emergency & our National Delegation to Support the Blumenauer Climate Emergency Resolution**

**Whereas**, the climate of planet Earth is rapidly deteriorating as evidenced by increasing reports of catastrophic fires (1-2), deforestation (1, 3-4), desertification (5-6), droughts (7-8), shifting plant and animal habitats (9-10), methane releases from permafrost (11-12), rapidly melting glacial and arctic ice (13-14); massively destructive superstorms (15-16), ocean acidification (17-18), economic loss (19-20); and

**Whereas**, Oregon does not have a state environmental policy act, which would require environmental review of statewide, private, and/or local actions (21), current laws protect the extraction of natural resources without regard for the sustainability of such resources in violation of the overwhelming majority opinion that life sustaining resources must be protected and sustained for the common good; and

**Whereas**, a handful of jurisdictions have laws protecting life-sustaining natural resources, the jurisprudence in the United States of America contains no body of law, but instead favors the rights of corporate entities to extract those resources without regard for people or planet (22-24); and

**Whereas**, 11,000 scientists support the efforts of Congressman Blumenauer (D-OR) to declare a climate emergency (25-27); and

**Whereas**, it is the civic and moral duty of citizens of a democracy to work together to maintain the habitability of planet Earth (28-30).

### **NOW, THEREFORE, THE JACKSON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1:** We the People demand that our leaders and politicians take transformative action to address the climate crisis, transform the economy using democratic principles of law, and establish a Declaration of the Rights of Nature.

**Section 2:** The Democratic Party of Oregon declare support for the Blumenauer Climate Emergency Resolution, which can marshal necessary action on a national scale.

**Section 3:** We urge the State of Oregon Legislature to:

- a) declare a Climate Emergency which threatens the natural resources, economies, and public health of all Oregonians;
- b) legislate a statewide Environmental Policy Act, requiring environmental impact statements

for all actions that could significantly affect the environment.

c) transition away from fossil fuels in a way that is just and prioritizes traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities.

d) pass concrete legislation that is in line with the imperative communicated by the scientific community.

e) adopt a Green New Deal to build the new economy we need and provide for ecological rejuvenation.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

1) Ecocide: The heedless or deliberate destruction of our shared natural resources, our natural environment.

2) Rights of Nature: The recognition and honoring that Nature has rights. It is the recognition that our ecosystems – including trees, oceans, animals, mountains – have rights just as human beings have rights. Rights of Nature is about balancing what is good for human beings against what is good for other species and what is good for the planet as a world. It is the holistic recognition that all life, all ecosystems on our planet are deeply intertwined. Rather than treating nature as property under the law, rights of nature acknowledges that nature in all its life forms has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles. And we the people have the legal authority and responsibility to enforce these rights on behalf of ecosystems. The ecosystem itself can be named as the injured party, with its own legal standing rights, in cases alleging rights violations.

Examples of existing rights of nature are Lake Erie in 2019, although this is in contention, manoomin (wild rice) in Minnesota in 2018, the Whanganui river in New Zealand in 2017, and the country of Ecuador in 2008. These designations have been on a case by case basis. It is our aim to establish rights of nature on an ecosystem basis. This would result in a better overall plan for the protection of both the specific cause and the ecosystem.

3) State environmental policy acts: adopted by CA, WA, and 14 other states, require that proposed state government actions (and in some states, local government or private actions as well) be evaluated for their potential impact on the environment or public health. For most proposed actions, state agencies prepare environmental impact statements that outline all potential environmental consequences of proposed actions, potential alternatives to the proposed actions, the possible unavoidable environmental effects, and the steps to be taken by state agencies to mitigate these effects and consequences.

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Resolution submitted by the Platform and Resolutions Committee.

**ADOPTED** by the Jackson County Democratic Party Central Committee on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2020.

  
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Tonia Moro,  
Chair, Jackson County Democratic Party

8/7/2020

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Date