

STAFF REPORT UTILITY MEETING

AGENDA DATE: February 28, 2023

DEPARTMENT: Vice Mayor McVoy

TITLE:

Resolution No. 05-2023 – committing to achieving net-zero carbon emissions for its Electric Utility

SUMMARY:

Approval from the Commission is requested to set an interim (2035) and a final (2045) goal for greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy usage for the City’s municipally owned utility.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:

In November of 2022, speaking about climate change, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres stated, “We are in the fight of our lives, and we are losing.” “Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing, global temperatures keep rising, and our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible.” “We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator.” “Climate change... is the defining issue of our age. **It is the central challenge of our century.**”

The Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA) is “dedicated to helping electric power stakeholders address the most pressing issues they encounter as they pursue the transition to a clean and modern electric future and a carbon-free energy system by 2050. [They] are a trusted partner providing education, research, standards, and collaboration to help utilities, electric customers, and other industry players across three pathways: Electrification, Grid Integration, Regulatory and Business Innovation.”

SEPA notes that “**globally, the scale of carbon reduction that must be achieved by the electric utility industry by 2035 in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C (compared to pre-industrial levels) is estimated between 70% to 92%.**”

In their “2021 Utility Transformation Profile” of leading utilities, SEPA also noted that, “**utilities with strong carbon-reduction targets are making the most progress in the transformation.**”

In 2019, in response to the latest climate science, the State of New York passed the **Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)**, legislation widely recognized as trailblazing. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) engaged a San Francisco firm, Energy and Environmental Economics, Inc. (E3), to analyze New York’s decarbonization opportunities. E3 evaluated the emissions impact of New York’s prior policies and explored any additional measures that would be needed to reach the State’s CLCPA targets.

Significantly, E3’s 47-page report published in 2020 concluded that, “**Deep decarbonization in New York is feasible using existing technologies.** This reinforces the conclusion of many other studies. All needed technologies currently exist and can safely be assumed to realize incremental improvements resulting from significant deployment. A high level of innovation will make the transition easier, but the transition is already technically feasible.”

New York State’s Climate Action Council, convened by the CLCPA, conducted a cost-benefit analysis and concluded that, “**the cost of inaction exceeds the cost of action [deep decarbonization] by more than \$90 billion.**”

The transition to a clean and modern electric future is consistently accompanied by prosumer policies: **“Diversity, equity, inclusion and access for all are required for a fair and just carbon-free energy future.”** (SEPA). “The [NY] Climate Act mandates that no less than 35% with a goal of at least 40% of our climate action benefits will go toward New York’s disadvantaged communities.”

As of January 2023, these Florida communities have committed to move to 100% clean energy: **Tallahassee, Gainesville, Orlando, Tampa, Cocoa, Satellite Beach, Dunedin, Largo, Safety Harbor, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, South Miami and Pinellas County.**

We conclude that:

- (1) there is a urgent worldwide need to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions;
 - (2) this will only be possible through the individual efforts of many different utilities;
 - (3) it is technologically possible to reach the decarbonization goals included in Resolution 05-2023;
 - (4) those utilities that set clear, quantitative goals make the swiftest progress;
 - (5) the potential benefits of action [decarbonization] appear to be greater than the significant costs of inaction;
 - (6) Social justice and customer benefits can and should be central to decarbonization;
-) The prudent choice is for Lake Worth Beach to set and actively pursue strong net-zero goals.

MOTION:

Move to approve/disapprove Resolution No. 05-2023 – committing to achieving net-zero carbon emissions for its Electric Utility

ATTACHMENT(S):

Resolution 05-2023