

Resolution # 70-15

**The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)
The Pennsylvania State University**



of the 70th Assembly
October 28, 2020

Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,

Climate Action for a Cleaner Penn State
Support for Action by Penn State to Address Climate Change
(Decided: [Y / N / A])

Nature of the Situation:

1
2 Anthropogenic climate change threatens the livelihoods of the entire Penn State community and
3 the State of Pennsylvania. Partly as a result of increases in emissions and concentrations of
4 greenhouse gasses in the past century, Pennsylvania's climate has undergone a long-term warming
5 of more than 1° C (1.8° F) and has seen a 10 percent increase in the amount of precipitation, with
6 an additional 8 percent increase in precipitation anticipated by 2050.¹ Due to this threat, Penn State
7 has formed several partnerships to create comprehensive climate solutions that align with a target
8 of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, including a 25 year
9 Solar Power Purchase Agreement and additional increased use of renewables.²
10
11 However, these plans only address a fraction of Penn State's overall greenhouse gas emissions and
12 do not take other aspects of sustainability and climate action into consideration. In order to address
13 all aspects of sustainability and climate action, student leaders from across Penn State have created
14 a petition that incorporates several strategies that the Penn State administration could adopt to
15 ensure a more sustainable future for the university and the surrounding community.³ These

¹ <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/climate/Pages/default.aspx>

² <http://www.sustainability.psu.edu/climate-action>

³ <https://psuclimateaction.weebly.com/>

16 strategies would expand upon the current Penn State strategic plan in order to take more aggressive
17 action to better meet targets set by the Paris Agreement.

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20 **Recommended Course of Action:**

21 By adopting this resolution, the Graduate and Professional Student Association formally supports
22 the Penn State Climate Action Plan, which calls on the university to consider:⁴

- 23 ● Reducing greenhouse gas emissions as rapidly as possible, setting a specific date
24 between 2030 and 2040 for reaching net zero emissions.
- 25 ● Prioritizing research efforts into carbon-capture technology, agricultural carbon
26 sequestration, and carbon neutral fuels, and using our institutional partnerships to
27 accelerate their deployment.
- 28 ● Divesting from fossil fuels and investing in the green economy, especially energy
29 efficiency, renewable energy sources, and zero-emissions transportation.
- 30 ● Reallocating a portion of the existing student fee towards sustainability initiatives.
- 31 ● Improving efforts to incorporate sustainability education into existing curriculum.
- 32 ● Recognizing that food demand and agriculture play a large role in contributing to
33 greenhouse gas emissions and incorporate sustainability into PSU Food Services
34 goals and operations.
- 35 ● Creating a Climate Action Committee made up of Penn State experts charged with
36 the capacity to study, set policy, assess, and publish progress on our climate
37 commitments.

38 Furthermore, the Graduate and Professional Student Association recommends that the
39 university consider the following actions:

- 40 ● Recognizing climate change has exacerbated systemic racial, social, and economic
41 injustices. Therefore, Penn State should maintain plans to reflect on the diversity of
42 our campus and follow initiatives we previously outlined in Resolution 70-12
43 (Racial Justice-Black Lives Matter)
- 44 ● Improving the efficiency of existing active climate change initiatives and actions.
- 45 ● Implementing an annual self-assessment/audit on the effectiveness, efficiency, and
46 progress of the Climate Action Plan.

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48 Further, the Executive Board is directed to communicate support of the Climate Action Plan
49 through a statement and directly to members of the Penn State administration and Board of
50 Trustees in conjunction with other student governments at the next available opportunity.

51

52 Respectfully submitted,

Alex Zhao
President

Amanda Burton
Delegate, College of Agricultural Sciences

⁴ <https://psuclimateaction.weebly.com/strategy.html>

Yashavika Duggal
Delegate, Eberly College of Science

Ama Agyapong
At-Large Delegate, Intercollege Graduate Degree Program

President _____ Affirm Veto

The Graduate and Professional Student Association