

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF DECLARING)	RESOLUTION NO. 26-6443
EXTREME HEAT AND CLIMATE CHANGE AS)	
CRITICAL AND GROWING THREATS AND)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
DESIGNATING A REGIONWIDE HEAT)	Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with
SEASON)	Council President Lynn Peterson

WHEREAS, in 1992 the people of the greater Portland region voted to approve Metro’s home rule charter, which charged the regional government with “its most important service, planning and policy making to preserve and enhance the quality of life and the environment for ourselves and future generations”; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Charter states in Section 6: “Metro is also authorized to exercise the following functions” including “metropolitan aspects of natural disaster planning and response coordination”; and

WHEREAS, the greater Portland region is faced with natural hazards, including extreme heat, wildfire smoke, drought, and ice storms, that are intensified by climate change; and

WHEREAS, average temperatures and extreme heat events are amplified by the urban heat island effect, defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as “a measurable increase in ambient urban air temperatures resulting primarily from the replacement of vegetation with buildings, roads, and other heat-absorbing infrastructure”; and

WHEREAS, historical land use and transportation planning decisions, including discriminatory housing policies, highway placement, and unequal distribution of tree canopy, have contributed to greater urban heat island effects and disparities in heat exposure, adaptive capacity, and sensitivity across the region; and

WHEREAS, these disparities, combined with other vulnerability factors, cause extreme heat events and urban heat island effects to disproportionately impact older adults, youth, people living alone, people living without access to cooling, unhoused people or people experiencing unstable housing, people with chronic health conditions, outdoor workers, veterans, people with lower income, and Black, brown, and Indigenous communities; and

WHEREAS, extreme heat is the deadliest weather-related disaster, killing more people on average than hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and lightning; and

WHEREAS, extreme heat is a critical and growing threat in greater Portland with wide-ranging impacts on public health, infrastructure, natural ecosystems, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, greater Portland experienced record-breaking temperatures during the 2021 heat dome that killed more than 80 people in the tri-county area and continues to experience increasingly higher numbers of heat-related illnesses each year; and

WHEREAS, extreme heat events can severely impact the region’s economy by disrupting business operations, damage infrastructure like roads and transit systems, and put stress on trees and other vegetation not adapted to higher temperatures; and

WHEREAS, Metro Council has demonstrated a commitment to addressing climate change through prior resolutions, and plans that guide Metro’s work – including the Regional Framework Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, Climate Smart Strategy, Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, Regional Waste Plan, Metro Parks and Nature System Plan, and Metro Sustainability Plan – include goals, policies, and actions to reduce climate pollution and address climate change impacts; and

WHEREAS, Metro’s Cooling Corridors Study developed recommendations to build regional resilience to extreme heat through research, analysis, and engagement with Metro’s technical and policy advisory committees and over 135 people – including vulnerable community members, representatives from community-based organizations, local and regional partners, and technical experts – and identified 47 actions to support those recommendations, including a recommendation for the Metro Council to declare extreme heat and climate change as issues of regional concern and to designate a regionwide heat season; and

WHEREAS, in 2020 the City of Portland declared a climate emergency, recognizing that the greater Portland region faces a human-made crisis that disproportionately impacts frontline communities, and committed to a climate justice and equity-focused approach in its climate action planning and implementation; and

WHEREAS, Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties observe the period of May 1 through September 30 for monitoring and reporting practices and standard operating procedures for heat, consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and guidance from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists; and

WHEREAS, Metro staff consulted with the State Resilience Officer, public health and emergency management staff at county agencies, the Metro Technical Advisory Committee and the Metro Policy Advisory Committee to develop this resolution; and

WHEREAS, local and regional public agencies and community-based organizations are currently working towards addressing extreme heat and climate change, and coordinated action is needed to strengthen these efforts and build regional resilience; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council:

1. Declares extreme heat and climate change as critical and growing threats to the greater Portland region.
2. Designates May 1 to September 30 as the official heat season for the greater Portland region to raise public awareness of extreme heat as a critical and recurring threat, with the understanding that this period may be amended in the future as climate conditions change.
3. Supports coordinated efforts to address extreme heat and other climate hazards within Metro’s internal functions and among local, regional, and state partners, prioritizing investments and interventions in communities experiencing disproportionate heat exposure, limited adaptive capacity, and heightened sensitivity to climate impacts.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this [insert date] day of [insert month] [insert year].

Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

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