

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF DECLARING	)	RESOLUTION NO. 26-5577
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	)	Acting Council President Duncan Hwang

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 region is faced with natural hazards, including extreme heat, wildfires and wildfire smoke, floods, drought, and ice storms, that are intensified by climate change; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the City of Portland declared a climate emergency, recognizing that the region faces a human-made crisis that disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, Clackamas County declared a local state of emergency and issued evacuation orders in the county in response to a number of wildfires threatening the lives and safety of county residents and causing extensive damage to homes and property across the county; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, Washington County Board of Commissioners directed staff from the Office of Sustainability and Public Health Division to collaborate on work addressing climate change in the community and, in 2025, Washington County completed the development of a climate action plan that identifies goals and strategic actions to address both climate mitigation and adaptation; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, Multnomah County released a draft climate justice plan, developed in collaboration with frontline community members and organizations and the City of Portland, that guides the county on strategies to address the growing impacts of climate change on communities through both mitigation and adaptation; and

WHEREAS, with the passage of E2SHB 1181 in 2023 by the Washington State Legislature mandating a climate change and resiliency component of local plans, Clark County developed a Climate Change Element as part of the county’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan that identifies goals and policies to advance climate mitigation and adaptation; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council developed a Resilience Assessment Plan that aims to guide investments to strengthen infrastructure against climate-related events, such as flooding, landslides, and seismic risks; and

WHEREAS, public agencies in the region have declared states of emergency for prolonged periods of extreme heat affecting the region multiple times over the years since 2021, and nine cities and several community-based organizations in the region have created climate action plans that guide efforts to reduce climate pollution and address climate impacts in their communities; 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, in 2023, Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties partnered to complete a heat mapping project that confirmed that heat is not experienced equally across the region due to differences in tree canopy coverage and development patterns; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned 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 is a critical and growing threat in the region with wide-ranging impacts on public health, the economy, infrastructure, natural ecosystems, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the region 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, Metro Council has demonstrated a commitment to addressing climate change through prior resolutions, plans, and policies that guide Metro’s efforts to reduce climate pollution and address climate change impacts, including the 2040 Growth Concept, 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; and

WHEREAS, Metro is implementing a variety of programs and activities to reduce heat and climate impacts, including Parks and Nature grant programs that support tree planting, habitat restoration, and land acquisition; stocking life jackets for community members to borrow while visiting Metro water recreation areas; operating the Oregon Convention Center as a cooling center; implementing heat illness prevention plans and training and cooling measures for outdoor workers and animals at the Oregon Zoo; funding climate-friendly transportation infrastructure through the Regional Flexible Funds Allocation process; and maintaining regional heat-related datasets to support future planning; and

WHEREAS, local and regional partners, including community-based organizations, are implementing initiatives to reduce heat and climate impacts, including organizing tree planting and green workforce development programs, operating cooling centers, expanding access to cooling resources and information, providing heat safety training, supplying mobile water filling stations and heat pump cooling units, and building more energy-efficient and climate-resilient transportation infrastructure and buildings; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, Metro's Cooling Corridors Study, developed through engagement with over 135 people including vulnerable community members, community-based organizations, local and

regional partners, and technical experts, recommended that Metro Council declare extreme heat and climate change as issues of regional concern and designate a regionwide heat season; 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 related to heat, consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and guidance from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists; and

WHEREAS, Metro staff consulted with the State Resilience Officer, Oregon Health Authority, 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 to address extreme heat and climate change, but are facing challenges to continue that work due to limited funding and capacity, underscoring the need for coordinated action 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, recognizing that the region is already experiencing the consequences of climate change and that those impacts are expected to intensify.
2. Designates May 1 to September 30 as the official heat season for the 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 30th day of April 2026.

Duncan Hwang, Acting Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney