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To: Mayor Meed Ward and Members of Council

From: Councillor Rory Nisan

Cc: Tim Commisso, Interim City Manager; Leah Bisutti, City Manager's Office; Alan Magi, Executive Director, Capital Works

Date: April 16, 2019

Re: Climate Emergency Declaration

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, I will be presenting a climate emergency declaration to Burlington City Council on April 23.

Numerous cities around the world have recently declared climate emergencies in response to findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that we have only 12 years to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees, beyond which any further increase would significantly worsen the risk to hundreds of millions of people of extreme heat, drought, floods and poverty. London (UK), Los Angeles, Vancouver, Halifax, Kingston and Hamilton have each declared climate emergencies recently.

The City of Burlington has already felt the effects of climate change over the past several years. Indeed, climate change is currently ranked as the third highest risk on the City's Enterprise Risk Register, which measures overall risk to the City.

The City has many current and future planned activities in relation to climate change such as the Green Fleet Strategy, The Community Energy Plan, Corporate Energy Plan, updating the Stormwater Design Standards and the Urban Forest Master Plan. The City has also set the important goal for city operations to be net carbon neutral by 2040.

The proposed climate emergency declaration would increase the city's ambition on climate change initiatives, including in the community, and provide staff and residents with clarity of purpose regarding the new Council's view of the importance of climate change.

I would like to recognize the many groups and organizations that are already taking collective action on climate change such as the Bay-Area Climate Change Council, the Halton Climate Collective, Conservation Halton, the Burlington Sustainable Development Committee, BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association and Sustainable Hamilton-Burlington among others.

One question asked is whether 'emergency' is the appropriate characterization of the current situation. The recent determination of the IPCC that we have only 12 years to take significant steps to stop the warming of planet is an urgent call for *immediate* action – we cannot wait for the 12th year to begin taking the necessary steps.

Second, whereas most emergencies grabbing the headlines are short-term and acute, long-term, protracted emergencies underlay many of the international challenges we face as members of a local, national and global community.

I would therefore be most grateful for your support for the climate emergency declaration attached to this memo.

Regards,
Councillor Rory Nisan