

February 6, 2022

Daniel Carlino
Missoula City Council
435 Ryman Street
Missoula, MT 59802

Councilman Carlino:

As members of Missoula First United Methodist Church's Green Team, we want to express our gratitude as you start your new term as a City Council member. We appreciate your dedication to serving our community, and the long hours and hard work that requires. Thank you.

As you begin addressing the many issues facing our city, we urge you to keep climate change in the forefront of your decision making. Specifically, we urge you to take immediate, decisive action toward achieving the city-county goal of 100 percent clean electricity by 2030. We are concerned about the lack of progress in converting our city to clean, renewable power. We stand ready to work with you – and advocate for you – to take the steps needed to eliminate fossil fuels from our power supply.

We know your attention will be pulled in many directions in the months to come: homelessness, hunger and poverty, skyrocketing home and rental costs. Our congregation is at work on these issues as well. But the climate crisis needs the same, or more, attention. The consequences of our warming planet already affect our community, and grow evermore dire. The urgency to act is real.

Other cities across the U.S. provide Missoula with stories of success to both inspire and guide our efforts. One example: Ithaca, N.Y., recently voted to electrify and decarbonize its 6,000 homes and businesses – and has a plan (down to the appliance level) to achieve that goal by 2030. By 2025, Ithaca will have converted all city government operations to clean electricity. The hardest part, leaders there say, is finding “the courage to make the commitment.”

We believe Missoula has that courage, and realistic paths to achieve our goal. A 2019 analysis said energy efficiency measures could net 15 percent of the 300,000 megawatt hours of carbon-fired power Missoula must replace. A solar farm could account for another 45 percent; wind could replace another 25 percent. But these are big projects. We need to start work now, and see real progress in 2022.

We come today, asking you to prioritize clean electricity as your council term begins. Let's convert our urban area to wind, solar, geothermal and hydro power. We will do our part; late last year, First United Methodist's congregation put our commitment in writing with the attached Climate Covenant. Since then, we have launched an effort to install 80 solar panels atop our church, enough to provide 90 percent of the building's electrical usage. We are ready to join you in action.

Sincerely,

Missoula First United Methodist Church Green Team

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