

RESOLUTION NO. 2008-16

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A PEAK OIL TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CONSEQUENCES OF DIMINISHING ENERGY RESOURCES ON WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM.

WHEREAS, proactive planning is critical so that our communities are resilient and prepared in the face of the environmental, economic, and social challenges of diminishing energy supplies; and

WHEREAS, currently U.S. economic, social and political institutions are dependent on abundant energy supplies; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County and its citizens and businesses depend on oil and natural gas for their economic welfare and their most critical activities, including transportation, food supply, water delivery, health care and electricity; and

WHEREAS, global reserves of oil and natural gas are finite and sufficient substitutes are unlikely to be available in the immediate future; and

WHEREAS, a growing body of energy industry experts believe that the world has already arrived at, or will soon arrive at, the peak of global oil production, which will be followed by an inevitable decline in available supply; and

WHEREAS, U.S. oil and natural gas production have peaked and are now in decline, ensuring our nation's continued and growing dependence on oil and natural gas imported from politically unstable regions; and

WHEREAS, global demand for oil and natural gas continues to increase, and the decline in global oil production threatens to increase resource competition, geopolitical instability, and lead to greater economic disruptions; and

WHEREAS, we can no longer assume that energy prices will continue with modest cost increases that can be easily planned for, but rather we are facing a future of increasing uncertainty in our energy supply and volatility in energy prices; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County governments, residents and businesses will benefit from greater attention to this topic, as they are not currently aware of the full implications of an impending decline in energy supplies, such as impacts on transportation, food production and delivery, business and home energy use, land use planning, municipal water and wastewater treatment, social services, and additional demands on first responders; and

WHEREAS, many of the options to lessening dependence on fossil fuels could result in local green collar jobs and substantial economic benefits; and

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WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County have each adopted Climate Action Plans, the success of which depends upon reducing carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, many other communities are developing plans that analyze the impacts of Peak Oil on their communities and recommend appropriate responses.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM: acknowledges the enormous challenges of confronting energy vulnerability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: a task force will be established to study and make recommendations regarding the consequences of diminishing energy resources. This task force should examine the energy vulnerabilities of our current infrastructure and consider appropriate changes in order to ensure that economic, social, and environmental infrastructures are resilient in the face of uncertainties brought about by shifting energy markets. The task force will include up to 18 members selected by the Mayor of Bellingham and the Whatcom County Executive, representing a broad range of government, community and business interests. The task force members guiding each sub-committee will include those with expertise and knowledge of the category to be examined. Sub-committees shall be established to include the categories of:

- 1) Land Use and Transportation;
- 2) Food and Agriculture;
- 3) Public and Social Services (including public education, health, social services, utilities and public safety);
- 4) Economic Transition;
- 5) Energy and Water;
- 6) Community Education and Preparation (to reduce dependence on fossil fuels).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: the task force's charge is:

1) To utilize current and credible data and information on the issues of peak oil and natural gas production and the related economic and societal consequences;

2) To seek community and business input on the impacts of declining oil supplies, rising energy prices and proposed adaptations;

3) To develop recommendations to the city and county councils in this calendar year on strategies the city and county governments can take to mitigate the impacts of declining energy supplies in areas including, but not limited to: transportation, business and home energy use, agriculture and food security, health care and social services, land use planning, water and wastewater treatment, and local energy development. These recommendations and proposed outcomes will include suggestions as to appropriate implementing bodies (governmental and non-governmental), and possible funding sources for outcome success.

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These recommendations will be integrated into the long term strategic planning efforts of both the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County; and

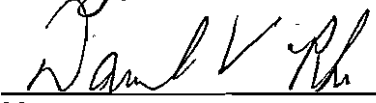
4) To propose methods of educating residents and businesses about this issue in order to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

PASSED by the Council this 19th day of May, 2008.



Council President **PRO TEM**

APPROVED by me this 27th day of May, 2008.



Mayor

ATTEST: 

Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



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