

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 455

Introduced by Haar, 21; Mello, 5.

Read first time February 25, 2016

Committee: Executive Board

WHEREAS, climate change presents serious, diverse, and ongoing issues for Nebraska. Many sectors are impacted, including water resources, agriculture, health care, energy generation and use, ecosystems, forestry, rural and urban communities, and insurance. Nebraska's life-giving water and soil resources will be subject to new stresses and risks. The impacts of climate change are projected to become far more serious for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the 2014 report by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) entitled "Understanding and Assessing Climate Change: Implications for Nebraska" provides a compilation of the scientific basis for understanding the impacts of climate change for our state; and

WHEREAS, stakeholder roundtables on the impacts of climate change representing the various sectors impacted by climate change were conducted in 2015 as a followup to the UNL report; and

WHEREAS, both the UNL report and the report from the stakeholder roundtables recommended the creation of a climate action plan. As the UNL report stated, "Action now is preferable and more cost effective than reaction later"; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 Nebraska Rural Poll found that 61 percent of rural Nebraskans agree or strongly agree that the state should develop a plan to address the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, an effective plan is needed both to reduce the potential negative impacts of climate change and to enable the state and its communities to take advantage of opportunities from adaptation and mitigation strategies, including

attracting new businesses and investment to Nebraska.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. The Legislature calls for the Executive Board of the Legislative Council to appoint a special committee to examine issues related to the impacts of climate change on the State of Nebraska and its residents, including assessments of vulnerability, risks, and economic impacts. The committee shall also examine opportunities, including methods of producing food, generating power, or protecting land and water, that can be used to adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change and that will provide jobs and economic benefits to Nebraskans. The committee shall consist of the following members:

(a) The chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature or his or her designee;

(b) The chairperson of the Natural Resources Committee of the Legislature or his or her designee; and

(c) Five at-large members of the Legislature appointed by the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

2. The committee members shall select co-chairpersons from the membership of the committee.

3. The committee shall gather, share, examine, and analyze data and information related to the impacts of climate change on the State of Nebraska and its resources and people.

4. The committee shall examine laws, policies, and planning efforts related to climate change in other states, and current laws, programs, and policies in the State of Nebraska that are related to climate change.

5. The committee shall examine funding opportunities including grant programs and opportunities to work with state agencies, political subdivisions, and educational institutions.

6. The committee shall establish a framework for a plan for the State of Nebraska related to the impacts of climate change on Nebraskans that includes:

(a) Measurable goals for addressing the negative impacts of climate change

and opportunities to benefit Nebraskans, including strategies for adaptation and mitigation; and

(b) Recommendations for new policies and changes to policies and programs that support such goals based on the information and data collected and generated, as well as funding needs and recommendations for legislation.

7. The committee shall seek information and encourage participation from state agencies, political subdivisions, educational institutions, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and members of the public in exploring methods to address issues of climate change as well as opportunities to adapt, mitigate, and create resiliency related to climate change. The committee may conduct one or more public hearings to gather such information.

8. The committee shall submit a framework for a climate plan together with its findings and recommendations to the Legislature on or before December 31, 2016.