

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 283

Introduced by Pansing Brooks, 28.

Read first time January 15, 2019

Committee: Executive Board

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to climate; to provide duties for the
- 2 University of Nebraska; to transfer funds; to require reports.
- 3 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

2 (1) The Fourth National Climate Assessment by the United States
3 Global Change Research Program and the Fifth Assessment Report of the
4 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change both conclude
5 that climate change is one of the major challenges of our time. The
6 impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale.
7 The assessment and report maintain that without action now, adapting to
8 these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly;

9 (2) For Nebraska, temperatures over the past century show the
10 state's average surface temperature is rising. Since the 1970s, nights,
11 winters, and summers have become warmer, growing seasons longer, and
12 high-rainfall events more common. Average temperatures in the state are
13 projected to increase, resulting in more heat waves. Average summer
14 rainfall is projected to decrease and become more variable in the future,
15 resulting in the soil becoming drier. While Nebraska's weather is highly
16 variable from year to year, these climatic trends are confirmed by data
17 from many sources worldwide;

18 (3) Long-term increasing average temperatures and the increased
19 occurrence of drought, heat waves, flooding, high winds, pests, and other
20 abnormal climate events in Nebraska and elsewhere will progressively
21 impact the economy of the state and quality of life. Many sectors and
22 resources will be impacted including agriculture, water, public health
23 and health care, energy generation and usage, ecosystems, forestry, rural
24 and urban communities, transportation, and commerce and industry. Climate
25 change is especially critical for Nebraska's agriculturally dominant
26 economy. Nebraska's life-giving water and soil resources continue to be
27 subject to new stressors and risks;

28 (4) Projected economic losses can be minimized and economic gains
29 realized by Nebraskans taking appropriate adaptive and mitigative
30 strategies. Economic opportunities exist through development of renewable
31 energy from our abundant wind and solar resources, reduction of

1 pollutants through decreased use of fossil fuels, improvements to soil
2 health and water management, development of more resilient crop, range,
3 and livestock systems, and development of new technologies and new
4 products that match Nebraska's vibrant and changing needs and resources;

5 (5) Understanding and Assessing Climate Change: Implications for
6 Nebraska, a 2014 report by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the
7 followup report, The Implications of Climate Change for Nebraska: Summary
8 Report of Sector-Based Roundtable Discussions, 2015, provide a
9 fundamental basis for understanding the impacts of increasing
10 temperatures on our state;

11 (6) The 2015 annual Nebraska Rural Poll found that sixty-one percent
12 of rural Nebraskans agree or strongly agree that the state should develop
13 a plan for adapting to climate change in order to reduce its impact on
14 agriculture, rural communities, forestry, and natural resources;

15 (7) Appropriate planning is needed to develop strategies to adapt to
16 and mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Nebraska economy and
17 the health and well-being of Nebraskans;

18 (8) The state must invest in research, data gathering, planning,
19 education, and coordination of efforts related to adaptation to and
20 mitigation of the impacts of climate change on Nebraska; and

21 (9) An effective plan to meet the challenges of climate change and
22 its impacts will enable the state and its communities to take advantage
23 of opportunities resulting from adaptation and mitigation strategies,
24 including attracting new businesses and investment to Nebraska, as well
25 as reducing the potential negative impacts of climate change.

26 Sec. 2. (1) The University of Nebraska shall develop an evidence-
27 based, data-driven, strategic action plan to provide methods for adapting
28 to and mitigating the impacts of climate change including:

29 (a) A baseline measurement of greenhouse gas emissions, also called
30 a carbon footprint, of the state;

31 (b) Measurable benchmarks and goals, including actions needed to

1 meet the goals and benchmarks;

2 (c) Assessment of risks and vulnerabilities from negative impacts of
3 climate change;

4 (d) Opportunities presented by strategies for adaptation and
5 mitigation of the impacts of climate change;

6 (e) Opportunities to improve and increase resilience to the impacts
7 of climate change;

8 (f) Potential economic impacts of climate change, both positive and
9 negative;

10 (g) Examination of impacts of climate change upon the following
11 sectors:

12 (i) Agriculture;

13 (ii) Water resources;

14 (iii) Health care and public health;

15 (iv) Energy generation and use;

16 (v) Ecosystems and forestry;

17 (vi) Rural and urban communities;

18 (vii) Transportation; and

19 (viii) Commerce and industry; and

20 (h) Recommendations for new policies and changes to policies and
21 programs that support the goals based on the information and data
22 collected and generated, including funding needs and recommendations for
23 legislation.

24 (2) The process for developing the action plan shall include:

25 (a) Extensive opportunities for public comment and engagement,
26 including, but not limited to, online input, public hearings, and public
27 and private sector engagement;

28 (b) Input from entomological, climate, water, agricultural, and
29 natural resource experts in Nebraska;

30 (c) Examination of comparable strategic action plans from other
31 states; and

1 (d) Such other activities as may be deemed necessary.

2 (3) The State Treasurer, at the direction of the budget
3 administrator of the budget division of the Department of Administrative
4 Services, shall transfer not to exceed two hundred and fifty thousand
5 dollars in total from the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund to
6 the University of Nebraska on or before December 15, 2020.

7 (4) On or before December 15, 2020, the University of Nebraska shall
8 submit the action plan to the Governor and electronically to the
9 Executive Board of the Legislative Council.