

RESOLUTION NO. .

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION
FOR A CLIMATE SUPERFUND**

RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, that:

WHEREAS, climate change, driven in large part by greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, increases the frequency and severity of extreme weather and climate-related disasters across California, including devastating wildfires, torrential storms, severe flooding, extreme heat, unprecedented drought, damaging sea level rise, and worsening air quality; and

WHEREAS, globally and locally, climate change disproportionately impacts populations least responsible for its causes, including historically underserved communities, while also placing increasing financial burdens on local governments, taxpayers, residents, and small businesses through rising costs for emergency response, public health impacts, infrastructure repair, disaster recovery, property damage, food system disruptions, and long-term climate adaptation; and

WHEREAS, California experienced historic wildfire seasons in 2020, with 8,648 wildfires burning more than 4.3 million acres, including in San Mateo County with the CZU Lightning Complex fire, and in 2025, with the Palisades and Eaton fires in Los Angeles alone burning 37,000 acres, destroying 16,000 structures, resulting in the

deaths of 30 community members and displacement of thousands of families, and causing over \$250 billion in damages; and

WHEREAS, climate change has resulted in increased drought conditions in the region, including an unprecedented multi-year drought that led to a 1-in-500-year low in Sierra snowpack and \$2.1 billion in economic and job losses, and which droughts not only exacerbate threats from wildfire, flooding, and landslides, but also threaten the region's water supply; and

WHEREAS, extreme heat, increased wildfires, and drought contribute to higher levels of particulate matter and air pollution in San Mateo County, which trigger asthma attacks and other respiratory illnesses leading to an increase in emergency department visits, and contributing to the region's high asthma rates, with these impacts falling disproportionately on low-income communities and residents living near high-traffic areas already burdened by vehicle emissions; and

WHEREAS, San Mateo County, bordered on two sides by water with the San Francisco Bay to the East and the Pacific Ocean to the West, contains some 109 total miles of ocean and bay coastline, is the only county on the West Coast with more than 100,000 residents at risk of three-feet of sea level rise, which jeopardizes its communities as well as sewer systems, beaches, parks, roads, civil infrastructure, and essential public services, and the estimated cost for sea level rise adaptation along the county Bayshore through 2050 is \$11 billion; and

WHEREAS, in December 2022 and early 2023, California experienced one of the longest stretches of continuous atmospheric-river activity observed in decades, bringing heavy rainfall, flooding, landslides, and strong winds across California, including impacts in San Mateo County that disrupted transportation, damaged infrastructure, and required significant emergency response resources costing the County an estimated \$22.9 million; and

WHEREAS, communities across California, including San Mateo County, and especially communities that are historically underserved, continue to bear the overwhelming public costs associated with climate-related disasters and the investments necessary to prepare for and respond to climate impacts; and

WHEREAS, San Mateo County incurs the substantial costs of ongoing investment in climate resilience and preparedness due to significant climate risks, including increased coastal flooding, sea level rise, extreme heat, wildfires and wildfire smoke, and reduced air quality, and more frequent and intense storms that threaten homes, businesses, infrastructure, and public safety; and

WHEREAS, proposed legislation to establish a California Climate Superfund, modeled on the federal Superfund law (CERCLA) and California's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act, would create a comprehensive cost study of climate damages in California, establish a mechanism to recover revenue from the largest fossil fuel polluters based on past emissions, and dedicate those funds to projects across the state, including in San Mateo County, to address climate-related damages resulting

from the extraction, production, refining, sale, and combustion of fossil fuels and their products; and

WHEREAS, funds generated through such legislation would be used for mitigation, adaptation, and recovery efforts in San Mateo County, with a large percentage (some 40%) going to disadvantaged communities, and could support investments in climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, infrastructure protection, and community resilience, helping ensure that the financial burden of climate impacts does not fall solely on taxpayers and local governments; and

WHEREAS, in supporting legislation for a California Climate Superfund, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors urges the State Legislature to pass a bill that allocates funds based on the severity of risks and damages to people and infrastructure, or other mechanisms, such as regional/local planning and implementation block grants, that provides appropriate allocation for climate-change harms experienced by localities; and

WHEREAS, other states, including Vermont and New York, have enacted climate superfund laws requiring major fossil fuel companies to contribute toward the costs of climate damages, and many local California governments, including the counties of Santa Clara, San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Cruz, and Sonoma, and the cities of San Jose, Oakland, and Santa Barbara, have provided written support for legislation to establish a California Climate Superfund; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors supports legislation for a California Climate Superfund that is distinct from, complementary to, and would not affect ongoing lawsuits to hold Big Oil accountable for their decades of deception and denial regarding the known, dire risks their products pose; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of fairness and fiscal responsibility to ensure that the costs of climate impacts are not borne solely by taxpayers and local governments, but are paid by those whose activities contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors supports the policy goals of legislation establishing a California Climate Superfund and encourages the California State Legislature to reintroduce and advance legislation that holds major fossil fuel polluters financially accountable for a share of the climate-related costs borne by California communities.

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