

THE VIRGINIA TECH CLIMATE ACTION COMMITMENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, in December 2007 President Steger met with students about the Presidents Climate Commitment, and in April 2008, President Steger charged the Energy & Sustainability Committee with drafting a Virginia Tech Climate Commitment and sustainability plan;

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech's electricity bill increased 54% from \$8.2 to \$12.6 million from 2004 to 2008 at a time of major state budget reductions, and electricity rates are expected to increase;

WHEREAS, efforts to reduce electricity and energy use and related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions also reduce the rising costs of energy;

WHEREAS, the 2007 Virginia Energy Plan and 2008 report of the Governor's Commission on Climate Change call on the Commonwealth to reduce its GHG emissions to 2000 levels by 2025;

WHEREAS, the Governor's Commission, Governor Kaine, the Town of Blacksburg, the Obama administration, and countless states, cities, and campuses across the country, have endorsed a long term target for GHG emissions of 80% below 1990 levels by 2050;

WHEREAS, the Virginia Division of Engineering and Buildings issued new rules in December 2008 requiring all new state buildings and major renovations to achieve either LEED certification or a 30% improvement in energy performance over ASHRAE 90.1 2004 and other requirements;

WHEREAS, the Governor's Commission calls on the state agencies to lead the Commonwealth to lower emissions by example, and Virginia Energy Plan also calls on the state's universities to "lead by example by implementing energy-efficiency actions across their campuses. These actions will not only reduce energy use and lower energy bills but will also help educate our next generation of leaders on how to manage energy wisely in their lives;"

WHEREAS, many colleges and universities throughout the country have joined this "lead by example" challenge and joined a national movement to "green" university campuses; 606 have signed the American Colleges and Universities Presidents Climate Commitment, including 7 ACC schools, 15 Virginia colleges, 16 top 50 research universities, and 26 land grant institutions; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech is the premier technical and design university in the Commonwealth and should take on this leadership role, exceed minimum state standards, and demonstrate emerging technologies and management approaches to reduce energy consumption and costs and reduce GHG emissions; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech has adopted Campus Energy and Water Policy 5505 that establishes a foundation for this commitment regarding efficient use of energy on campus.

WHEREAS, 18 Virginia Tech student organizations are members of the Campus Coalition for Sustainability and student, staff, and faculty interest in sustainability issues is at an all-time high;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the university shall adopt the following Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment, effective immediately:

1. Virginia Tech will be a Leader in Campus Sustainability.
2. The university will represent the VTCAC&SP in the Virginia Tech Strategic Plan.
3. Virginia Tech will establish a target for reduction of campus GHG emissions to 80% below 1990 emission level by 2050, and interim targets from 2006 emissions of 316,000 tons consistent with the Virginia Energy Plan, the Governor's Commission on Climate Change, the Town of Blacksburg, and the federal administration: for 2012, 295,000 tons (on path to 2025 target); for 2025, 255,000 tons (2000 emission level); and for 2050, 38,000 tons (80% below 1990 emission level).
4. Virginia Tech will work toward these emission reduction targets through improved energy efficiency, reduction of energy waste, replacement of high-carbon fuels, and other measures identified in the VTCAC&SP.
5. Virginia Tech will establish an Office of Sustainability to
 - a. Coordinate programs for campus sustainability,
 - b. Oversee implementation of the VTCAC&SP,
 - c. Monitor annual electricity and other energy use and GHG emissions, and
 - d. Working with faculty and departments, manage a campus-wide student internship and undergraduate research program using the campus as a sustainability laboratory
6. Virginia Tech will pursue LEED Silver certification or better and exceed ASHRAE 90.1 2004 energy performance by 35% (ASHRAE 90.1 2007 by 30%) for all new buildings and major renovations. Capital budgets should account for future energy price, cost of building operation, return on investment, and environmental benefits of achieving this level of performance.
7. Virginia Tech will improve electricity and heating efficiency of campus facilities and their operations, including the heating and cooling infrastructure and operation, lighting efficiency, controls and operation, and equipment efficiency and controls.
8. The university will adopt at least 4 reduction measures in the Waste Minimization component of the national RecycleMania competition. Virginia Tech Recycling will adopt a goal of 35% recycle rate by 2012 and 50% by 2025.
9. Virginia Tech will require purchase of Energy Star rated equipment, maximum practicable recycled-content paper, and other low life-cycle cost products, with exceptions for special uses.

10. Virginia Tech will engage students, faculty and staff through education and involvement to reduce consumption of energy, water, and materials in academic and research buildings, dining and residence halls, and other facilities.
11. Virginia Tech will improve transportation energy efficiency on campus through parking, fleet, and alternative transportation policies. Alternative transportation use will increase from the current level of 45%, to a goal of 52% in 2015, and 60% in 2020.
12. The university will create and support a virtual Virginia Tech School of Sustainability or similar mechanism to coordinate, develop, and communicate related instructional, research, and outreach academic programs.
13. The university will monitor energy use and GHG emissions as well as changing internal and external conditions, prepare an annual 'report card' showing progress towards targets, and periodically re-evaluate targets, making adjustments to targets as appropriate based on changing internal and external conditions and evolving technologies.
14. With regard to all the items in this resolution, major personnel and investment decisions, including capital projects, associated with implementing the VTCAC&SP will be based on a joint review of costs and benefits by university financial and facilities staff and be subject to availability of funds. Virginia Tech will provide funding to support sustainability programs through a variety of sources, which might include savings from reduced electricity and energy fuels, E&G funds, loans, a Green Development Fund from private sources, and a student Green Fee.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution authorizing the University to adopt the Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment be approved.

June 1, 2009