

Resolution in Support of Clean, Renewable Energy

Authored by the Environmental Action Group of Furman University

WHEREAS, the biggest cause of global warming is the carbon dioxide produced when fossil fuels are burned for energy; and

WHEREAS, a 2003 Pentagon report found that global warming and “the risk of abrupt climate change...should be elevated beyond a scientific debate to a U.S. national security concern;” and

WHEREAS, air particle pollution from “dirty” power plants is estimated to cause 24,000 deaths per year in the United States, along with 38,000 heart attacks, 550,000 asthma attacks, and over three million lost work days; and

WHEREAS, power plants are responsible for 41 percent of total mercury emitted, and mercury contamination has led to recommended restrictions of fish intake, and, in specific, South Carolina has advised against consuming fish from over 1,600 miles of river and over 45,000 acres of lake; and

WHEREAS, colleges across the nation (including Duke University, Connecticut College, Harvard University, Penn State, Carnegie Mellon University, and many others), are adopting renewable energies by meeting a portion of their energy demands with “clean” energy sources; and

WHEREAS, Furman University currently uses about 28,000,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, enough to power a small city; and

WHEREAS, Furman University acquires its electrical energy from “dirty” power plants (coal); and

WHEREAS, the production of the power consumed by Furman University expels large quantities of carbon dioxide and other global warming gases equivalent to driving a car over 85 million miles, which would take over 10,600 acres of trees to absorb; and

WHEREAS, “clean” alternative energy sources exist today, which could offset the “dirty” energy that Furman currently purchases; and

WHEREAS, the Furman University Board of Trustees unanimously approved the following goal in February 2001: *To strengthen our commitment to the environment by promoting sustainability through educational programs, campus operations/construction practices and public awareness initiatives;* and

WHEREAS, Furman University desires to attract incoming students of the highest caliber and diverse backgrounds, many of whom consider environmental factors in their decision making; and

WHEREAS, a Strategic Planning Working Group on Environmental Initiatives formed by Furman University drafted a document in 2003 that addresses many of the goals and strategies the University should recognize and implement regarding environmental and sustainability issues, part of which states, “Increasing the environmental sensitivity of Campus Operations and Construction Practices will require a consideration of the energy and materials purchased and used on campus, and a consideration for the fate of the wastes that we produce;” and

WHEREAS, Furman University is a member of the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future whose mission it is to “make sustainability a major focus of teaching, research, operations and outreach at colleges and universities worldwide” and includes “embodying responsible consumption of food and energy;” therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the student body of Furman University is opposed to the continued participation in a destructive energy paradigm and the consumption of non-renewable, polluting energy sources by Furman University; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the student body of Furman University is in support of clean, alternative energy production; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the student body of Furman University believes this institution should lead by example, and strive to meet its sustainability and environmental goals previously outlined; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the student body of Furman University strongly encourages Furman University to meet its future energy needs with clean, renewable energy on an increasing scale.