

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2025-1037

TITLE: Resolution Calling on the University of Florida to be Sustainable and Environmentally Responsible

AUTHOR(S): Senator Austin Britton, Senator Cassandra Urbenz,

SPONSOR(S): Senator Arshan Falasiri

WHEREAS, the University of Florida (UF) is a leading educational institution and a pillar of the academic and social community, dedicated to advancing knowledge, research, and social responsibility; and,

WHEREAS, climate change poses an urgent and escalating global threat, driven primarily by human activities such as fossil fuel consumption, deforestation, and industrial emissions, leading to rising temperatures, extreme weather events, sea level rise, and disruptions to ecosystems and human societies [1]; and,

WHEREAS, the fossil fuel industry has contributed significantly to climate change through the extraction, processing, and burning of carbon-based fuels, which leads to environmental degradation, rising global temperatures, and the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities. The fossil fuel industry is responsible for about 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). [1]; and,

WHEREAS, fossil fuel companies often engage in practices that promote environmental harm, while also funding lobbying efforts to undermine environmental protections, thereby delaying necessary action to address climate change. For example, ExxonMobil has been widely criticized for funding campaigns that spread misinformation about climate science [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the Student Senate has previously expressed and supported sustainable initiatives such as SSB2024-1425, SSB2024-1543, and through passage of a Green New Deal [3]; and,

WHEREAS, while the University of Florida currently has a Sustainability Committee, as well as an existing Climate Action Plan these actions are not sufficient to meet the scale and urgency of the climate crisis, requiring more ambitious commitments and accelerated implementation of sustainable practices [4][5]; and,

WHEREAS, failure to take bold and immediate action to enhance the University of Florida's sustainability efforts would undermine the institution's responsibility to combat climate change, contribute to environmental degradation, and jeopardize the well-being of current and future generations; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate

reaffirms its commitment to previous sustainability resolutions and pledges to build upon them by adopting more ambitious and actionable measures to address climate change, reduce environmental impact, and promote a more sustainable future for the campus and broader community.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate supports the mission of the Sustainability Committee and other sustainability initiatives on campus by supporting additional resources and institutional backing, and calls for student, faculty, and staff engagement to advance environmental stewardship and sustainable development.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate supports increasing funding for sustainability initiatives, including renewable energy projects, waste reduction programs, sustainable transportation, and environmental education, to ensure meaningful progress toward a greener and more resilient campus.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate urges the University of Florida to work toward minimizing environmental risks to current and future generations by implementing policies and practices that reduce carbon emissions, conserve natural resources, and enhance climate resilience across campus operations and infrastructure.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the Student Senate calls on the University of Florida to affirm its commitment to addressing climate change and environmental injustice by taking immediate, concrete steps to align its practices with its environmental values.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to UFICO CEO Mark Baumgartner, Chair of the Finance, Strategic Planning and Performance Metrics Committee Marsha D. Powers, and Director of Sustainability Matt Williams

[1]<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/20/opinion/letters/exxon-climate-change.html>

[3]<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/feb/21/university-of-florida-student-senate-passes-green-new-deal>

[4]<https://fora.aa.ufl.edu/University/JointCommittees/Sustainability-Committee>

[5]<https://sustainable.ufl.edu/campus-initiatives/uf-climate-action/>