RESOLUTION 2021-007

A RESOLUTION ADVOCATING FOR UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY THE COMBINED HEAT AND POWER FACILITY

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Sponsor: Executive Committee

WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students (CGS) is the representative body of all graduate students enrolled at The Ohio State University as established by Article 2, Section 1 of the CGS Constitution; and

WHEREAS the Council or its appointed representative(s) have the power to sit as an advisory agent on behalf of graduate students on all matters brought before personnel, committees, or agencies of The Ohio State University involving the interest of graduate students as established in Article 3 Section 3 of the CGS Constitution; and

WHEREAS the Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility Committee (SERC) advocates for sustainability and environmentally friendly policies and procedures within CGS and across The Ohio State University; and

WHEREAS the Ohio Power Siting Board issued an Opinion, Order, and Certificate approving the Ohio State University’s Combined Heat and Power Facility on September 17th,1,2; and

WHEREAS the Combined Heat and Power Facility will produce thermal energy powered by natural gas which will require natural gas extraction via hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking; and

WHEREAS extracting natural gas via fracking has been shown to contaminate drinking water, displace communities, negatively impact ecological systems, and emit high amounts of methane into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS methane is the second most prevalent greenhouse gas within the atmosphere and is more efficient than carbon dioxide (CO₂) at trapping solar radiation and contributing to global climate change; and

WHEREAS Ohio State did not properly investigate the adverse environmental, economic, or social consequences of natural gas extraction for the Combined Heat and Power Facility; and

WHEREAS students have opposed the Combined Heat and Power plant due to potential harm for people and environment, and

WHEREAS Ohio State has not, as of yet, identified the source of natural gas for the Combined Heat and Power Plant but acknowledged it will be incrementally derived from shale deposits; and

2 https://buildingthefuture.osu.edu/combined-heat-and-power-plant
8 Tufekci Cross-Exam at 17:17-20, 144:19-145:12; see Potter Cross-Exam at 197:2-19.
WHEREAS The Ohio State University expressed the motivation for the construction of the Combined Heat and Power Plant was to increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, as well as for economic reasons; and

WHEREAS Ohio State representatives have privately disclosed that the plant will save the University approximately 10 million dollars per year in heat and power expenses; and

WHEREAS disenfranchised communities have historically been disproportionately affected by fossil fuel extraction and climate change; and

WHEREAS affected communities are largely composed of those with lower income, higher economic stress, lower education levels, and are often identified as communities of color; and

WHEREAS poverty levels have been correlated with active fracking wells, which in turn, affects reliable information access and mobility of individuals within those communities; and

WHEREAS Ohio State’s Combined Heat and Power Plant will be directly contributing to further disenfranchisement of vulnerable communities through natural gas extraction; and

WHEREAS the impacts of the Ohio State’s Combined Heat and Power Plant are in direct conflict with the university’s sustainability goal of engagement that support long-term economic, social, and environmental welfare of the campus, surrounding neighborhoods, and global community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students recommends for Ohio State to actively work to mitigate inequities within communities affected by natural gas extracted for the Combined Heat and Power Plant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Ohio State allocates a substantial portion of funding to affected communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Ohio State support a robust assessment of the impact the Combined Heat and Power Plant on both the Columbus community and communities from which natural gas for the plant is extracted from; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a third party external to Ohio State be utilized for this assessment in order to mitigate bias and conflicts of interest; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Ohio State should follow the example of existing initiatives to understand how social and economic conditions combine with fossil fuel induced pollution to contribute to inequitable environmental and health related outcomes, such as the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map Project, in order to fully understand the plant’s impact; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Ohio State should emulate existing policies aimed at mitigating inequities from fossil fuel extraction such as the California Senate Bill 535, which directs funding to disadvantaged communities; and

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12 https://si.osu.edu/sites/default/files/Energy%20Use_CHP%20FAQ%20092320.pdf
13 Information disclosed during a webinar hosted by the Sustainability Institute to inform students about the CHP plant.
16 https://ohiostatebuckeyes.com/sustainability/goals/
17 https://deohs.washington.edu/washington-environmental-health-disparities-map-project
18 https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/sb535
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Ohio State should leverage the experience of President Kristina Johnson, as Under Secretary of Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy, who led the creation of the Strategic Technology Energy plan to reduce national carbon emissions and achieve 80% clean energy electricity\textsuperscript{20,21}; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Ohio State additionally leverage the knowledge of its researchers as experts in fields of sustainability, environmental justice, and climate research to mitigate the negative effects of the Combined Heat and Power Plant and lead on climate action as an institution; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students directs its President and Vice President to distribute this resolution to The Ohio State University President Kristina M. Johnson, Executive Vice President and Provost Bruce McPherson, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School Alicia Bertone, Vice President for Student Life Melissa Shivers, Vice President for Government Affairs Stacy Rastaukas, and the Chair of the Council on Student Affairs Jordan Vadja, and all other relevant leadership and authorities of The Ohio State University and its partners.

Approved: Yes/No

Date: __11/6/20____

Stephen J. Post, President

\textsuperscript{20} https://energy.stanford.edu/events/distinguished-lecture-kristina-johnson
\textsuperscript{21} https://www.energy.gov/diversity/contributors/dr-kristina-m-johnson