

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

A JOINT RESOLUTION designating April 22 each year as "Personal Carbon Footprint Awareness Day."

WHEREAS, New Jersey's long coastline and low elevation mean that it will be one of the states most affected by climate change; and

WHEREAS, Although each person's individual contribution to greenhouse gas production may be small, the cumulative effect of small behavior changes by millions of New Jerseyans would be significant; and

WHEREAS, There are habits that citizens of the State could easily adopt today that would reduce their carbon footprint, which is a measure of the net amount of greenhouse gases that are released as result of a person's energy use, transportation, consumption, and other actions; and

WHEREAS, Transportation has recently surpassed electricity generation as the top source of greenhouse gases, so walking and biking more, taking public transportation, switching to an electric car, and simply driving less aggressively are effective ways of reducing one's personal carbon footprint; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's "Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act," enacted in 1999, allows consumers to choose their electricity supplier, and switching to a supplier that uses renewable sources of electricity may be an option for many citizens of the State; and

WHEREAS, Eliminating drafts in one's home by adding weather-stripping to doors and caulk to windows, adding insulation, switching to LED light bulbs, and turning down the heat and air-conditioning when the home is unoccupied will reduce electricity and gas usage, and the associated greenhouse gas emissions, and will also save money; and

WHEREAS, Cutting down on meat consumption is also an easy way to reduce one's personal carbon footprint, and, according to a study by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, eating just one vegetarian meal per week for a year makes the same difference in greenhouse gas emissions as driving 1,000 fewer miles; and

WHEREAS, Using more reusable items - such as thermoses, durable plastic or glass food containers, and reusable shopping bags - and fewer single-use items also uses less energy and can reduce pollution caused by littering; and

WHEREAS, Food waste generates methane emissions as it decomposes in landfills, so reducing the amount of food that one wastes - as well as composting household vegetable waste - can reduce the emissions of this potent greenhouse gas; and

WHEREAS, It is appropriate for the citizens of the State to celebrate April 22, which is "Earth Day," by examining how they can make a small change in their habits to combat climate change; and

WHEREAS, April 22, 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of "Earth Day," which in 1970 helped to raise public awareness of the environmental causes of public health problems, and the theme of the 2020 "Earth Day" is climate action, making this an ideal year to take time to consider one's personal carbon footprint; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper for the Legislature to designate "Earth Day," April 22 of each year, as "Personal Carbon Footprint Awareness Day;" now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.36:2-414 "Personal Carbon Footprint Awareness Day", designated.

1. April 22 of each year is designated as "Personal Carbon Footprint Awareness Day," in order to encourage the citizens of the State to reduce their carbon footprints.

C.36:2-415 Annual observance.

2. The Governor is respectfully requested to issue a proclamation each year calling upon public officials and the citizens of this State to observe "Personal Carbon Footprint Awareness Day" with appropriate activities and programs.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 10, 2022.