



# Cornell University Student Assembly

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Status/Result:	New Business

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## S.A. Resolution #20

### Student Assembly’s Support for and Input on “Options for Achieving a Carbon Neutral Campus by 2035”

ABSTRACT: This resolution seeks to support Cornell University’s commitment to carbon neutrality by a firm deadline of 2035 and push for transparent, shared decision-making in reaching carbon neutrality through the creation of a publicly accessible platform for annual update reports.

Sponsored by: Miranda Kasher, ‘19

**Whereas**, in 2007, President Skorton was one of the first university presidents to sign on to the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, thus positioning Cornell as a leader in climate action amongst institutions of higher education,

**Whereas**, Cornell faculty, students, and staff collaborated to develop the Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2009 to comprehensively outline Cornell University’s commitment, duty, and strategy for offsetting net campus carbon emissions as a “living laboratory” to the world,

**Whereas**, in 2014, President Emeritus Skorton “formally recognize[d] the need to accelerate [Cornell’s] efforts by embracing the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2035 [...], motivated by a resolution, passed by the Faculty Senate on December 11, 2013, that called, in part, for an accelerated timetable for achieving carbon neutrality,”

**Whereas**, in Spring 2016, Provost and then Acting President Kotlikoff charged the Senior Leadership Climate Action Group (SLCAG) with achieving carbon neutrality by 2035,

**Whereas**, in Fall 2016 a report written by SLCAG and others titled “Options for Achieving a Carbon Neutral Campus by 2035” was released outlining potential plans of action Cornell University can pursue in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035,

**Whereas**, as of now, there is no accessible, consistently updated, and transparent mode of communicating administrative decision-making, updates on actions outlined by the Climate Action Plan, or progress being made on reaching carbon neutrality,

**Be it therefore resolved**, the Student Assembly support and commend the efforts of SLCAG and Cornell University in obtaining carbon neutrality by 2035,

**Be it further resolved**, the Student Assembly recommend that SLCAG engage in clear communication with the Cornell community and aim for transparency when pursuing the different options outlined within the Options for Achieving a Carbon Neutral Campus by 2035 report by providing updates on the progress of these initiatives,

44 **Be it further resolved**, that a single centralized platform to share resources and updates on  
45 Cornell University's goal of carbon neutrality be created through two potential ways:  
46 1. The Student Assembly asks the Cornell Campus Sustainability Office (CSO) to create a  
47 digital, collaborative forum on their website that gives relevant annual updates on the  
48 carbon neutrality goal and Climate Action Plan and allows community members to easily  
49 share documents or ask questions;  
50 2. *Or* the Student Assembly, as a collaboration between the Technology Committee and  
51 Environmental Committee, create a digital forum that provides updates on the carbon  
52 neutrality goal and Climate Action Plan (e.g. PDF of resolutions taking a stance on CAP,  
53 all administrative decision-making relevant to CAP, all updates on the ongoing work on  
54 Cornell's geothermal energy project, etc.);  
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56 **Be it finally resolved**, that an annual public forum with members of SLCAG and facilitated by  
57 the Cornell Campus Sustainability Office and the Environmental Collaborative, be pursued as a  
58 way to engage the campus community and create an open, transparent dialogue between Cornell  
59 administration and students.  
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62 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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64 Marcel Ramos, '17  
65 *Environmental Committee Chair, Student Assembly*

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67 Cynthia Bensburg, '17  
68 *Environmental Committee Member, Student Assembly*

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70 Emily Dong, '18  
71 *Previous Environmental Committee Chair, Student Assembly*

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73 Jennifer Juliano, '17  
74 *Co-facilitator, Environmental Collaborative (Eco)*

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76 Samsuda Khem-nguad, '17  
77 *Senior Member, Environmental Collaborative (Eco)*

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79 *(Review by: Environmental Committee, 11/3/16, 12-0-1)*  
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