

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Board approves major investments to address climate change** *County to develop plan and hire new sustainability officer to lead efforts*

**March 29, 2021, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI.** – The Oakland County Board of Commissioners took two major steps toward combatting climate change at the county level at its meeting on March 25. First, the Board approved funding for the Campus Sustainability Planning Project, which will provide a roadmap to a greener, more sustainable operation of county facilities. Additionally, the Board created an environmental sustainability officer position to oversee the creation and implementation of Oakland County’s sustainability plan.

“Climate change is real and requires urgent action!” Board Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak) said. “This is the greatest investment to address the climate crisis and protect our environment in county history. Today’s investment will pay future dividends by decreasing carbon emissions, reducing energy costs, improving public health, and doing our part to protect the planet and our communities.”

The sustainability plan will establish a vision for achieving a net zero energy campus and outline a general philosophy to guide operations and future capital improvement planning. It will focus on four areas: campus operations, emissions and energy, nature and ecosystems, and health and well-being. By leading the region in environmental protection, the plan may also help local communities as they develop their own sustainability plans.

The plan, which will be developed by AECOM, will take 12 months to complete and costs \$625,000.

In addition, the Board has created an environmental sustainability officer position. This subject matter expert will drive strategy, assist in developing the County’s near-term and long-term sustainability agenda, track progress, engage external partners and work with county departments to execute sustainability initiatives. The base pay will be \$129,817.

“These two initiatives go hand in hand,” Commissioner **Gwen Markham** (D-Nov) said. “I’m an engineer, I like data. With this plan and new position, we will better understand the county’s place in driving the

positive environmental change we want to see. We all want to protect our lakes, trails and parks, and these actions will give us a blueprint on how to do that efficiently.”

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