PURDUE UNIVERSITY | University Senate

Senate Document 25-14
26 January 2026

To:	Purdue University Senate
From:	University Resources Policy Committee Purdue Graduate Student Government Purdue Student Government
Subject:	Resolution in support of renewable energy sources for campus
Reference:	Purdue Student Senate, Resolution 25-11 Purdue Graduate Student Senate, Resolution FA25-R002
Disposition:	University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

Rationale: While Purdue's Sustainability Master Plan in 2010 and 2020 both called for the development of renewable energy sources for campus, no progress has yet been made on these commitments. Meanwhile, numerous universities across the country are assuming leadership positions in sustainability by developing renewable energy portfolios. At the same time, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has consistently emphasized that any pathway to decarbonizing will rely heavily on the adoption of renewable energy.

Proposal: We call upon Purdue to make a time-bound commitment to developing renewable energy sources for campus.

For:

Senators (9)
Benjamin Dunford
Richard Johnson-Sheehan
Kyle Haynes
Lori Hoagland
Kee-Hong Kim
Paul Mort
Tae-Hong Park
Changyou Wang
Howard Zelaznik

Advisors (0)

Students (2)
Ayooluwa Ojo
Shayne Ryan

Against:

Senators (3)
Donald (Joey) Woodyard
Thomas Hacker
Brian Richert

Abstained:

Advisors (2)
Carl Krieger
Kim Pearson

Absent:

Senators (2)
Amy Atkinson
Daniel Cziczo

Advisors (0)

Students (1)
Elisabeth Mauermann

WHEREAS, Purdue University has long been recognized as a global leader in innovation, research, and real-world problem solving, named as one of top 50 universities "powering global innovation"[1];

WHEREAS, Purdue has won several awards recognizing its commitment to sustainability, including being ranked #74 nationally and #5 in the Big Ten by QS World University Rankings[2] and winning sixteen consecutive Tree Campus USA awards;[3]

WHEREAS, Purdue is home to world-class research in renewable energy and advanced technology, including large contributions from the College of Engineering,[4] research carried out by affiliates of the Institute for a Sustainable Future,[5] and other student-led programs, such as the Sustainable Energy Club,[6] each of which could contribute expertise to directly inform campus energy strategy;

WHEREAS, despite reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by 37% from fiscal year 2011 (when Purdue's Wade Power Plant still relied up on burning coal),[7] in the most recent report from AASHE STARS Purdue received a 0/4 on "clean and renewable energy," signaling that Purdue still falls short when it comes to renewable energy installation and innovation;[8]

WHEREAS, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UNIPCC) (the gold standard in international climate science and policy) finds that "All global modelled pathways that limit warming to 2°C (>67%) or lower by 2100 involve rapid and deep and in most cases immediate GHG emissions reductions in all sectors," further noting that reductions "can be achieved through a combination of energy efficiency and conservation and a transition to low-GHG technologies and energy carriers";[9]

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[1] https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/2025/Q2/purdue-ranks-among-top-50-global-research-universities-powering-innovation/

[2] https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/purduetoday/2025/Q1/purdue-ranks-no-5-in-big-ten-for-sustainability/utm_source=sfmcPT&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=250206PurdueToday&utm_term=Purdue+ranks+No.+5+in+Big+Ten+for+sustainability&utm_id=1046959

[3] https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/purduetoday/2025/Q1/purdue-earns-16th-consecutive-tree-campus-usa-award/

[4] https://engineering.purdue.edu/ME/Research/SustainableEnergy;

[5] https://research.purdue.edu/isf/

[6] https://engineering.purdue.edu/Engr/Academics/Undergraduate/student-organizations/PEPC-Groups/sec

[7] https://www.purdue.edu/physicalfacilities/units/cpas/sustainability/initiatives/greenhouse-gas-emissions.html

[8] https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/purdue-university-in/report/2023-03-23/

[9] Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 35-115, doi: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647, p. 86.

WHEREAS, the UNIPCC notes that in any effort to limit global warming to "2°C or below, almost all electricity [will be] supplied from zero or low-carbon sources…such as renewables or fossil fuels with CO2 capture and storage";[10]

***WHEREAS*,** Purdue's 2010 Sustainability Master Plan called for the creation of on-campus and off-campus wind farms, while also calling for the university to "source renewable energy for 10 percent of the campus's total energy demand," signaling a commitment to updating our energy grid (although we made no discernible progress towards this goal);[11]

WHEREAS, Purdue's 2020–25 Sustainability Master Plan called for the university to pursue a start of 500 KW of renewable energy,[12] signaling a dedication to decarbonizing our campus's energy grid, yet no progress has been reported to the Purdue community;[13]

WHEREAS, renewable energy options are rapidly becoming the most financially responsible method of energy sourcing in both up-front installation/purchasing cost and in lifecycle investment returns;[14]

***WHEREAS*,** the city of Lafayette has begun installing solar power production at numerous city-owned venues and now reports tremendous cost savings;[15]

WHEREAS, numerous top research universities have developed robust renewable energy portfolios, including Big Ten universities (with, e.g., the University of Iowa drawing 84% of its power from renewable sources) and peer institutions (with, e.g., Carnegie Mellon extracting all of its power from renewables);[16]

WHEREAS, there are several pathways with potential applications for developing renewable energy for our campus, including but not limited to building Purdue-owned renewables on campus (e.g., solar panels on rooftops), building Purdue-owned renewables off campus (e.g., developing a wind/solar farm on nearby land), or purchasing electricity from non-Purdue-owned renewable power plants;[17]

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[10] *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 35-115, doi: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647, pp. 86-87.

[11] https://web.archive.org/web/20150320211026/http://www.purdue.edu/sustainability/documents/sustainability_strategicplan.pdf

[12] https://www.purdue.edu/physicalfacilities/units/cpas/sustainability/sustainability-master-plan/energy.html

[13] Gurganus, Kayla and Dahmen, Lynne, "Purdue STARS Performance Analysis" (2025). Institute for a Sustainable Future Documents. Paper 1. http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284317850, p. 22.

[14] https://atb.nrel.gov/electricity/2024/about

[15] https://lafayette.in.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15636/City-of-Lafayette-Breaks-Ground-on-new-Solar-Field-at-Lafayette-Renew-20230816pdf

[16] https://www.epa.gov/greenpower/green-power-partnership-top-30-college-university

[17] For a list of potential campus renewable energy projects, see https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/a-clean-energy-future-for-americas-colleges-and-universities

***WHEREAS*,** transitioning to renewable energy will reduce our total campus-wide greenhouse gas emissions, aligning ourselves with the progress achieved by other universities and establishing ourselves as a leader in sustainability and in financial and technological innovation;

***WHEREAS*,** in Fall 2025, the Purdue Student Government and the Purdue Graduate Student Government each passed a resolution calling upon Purdue University to develop more renewable energy.[18]

Therefore, be it RESOLVED,

***THAT*,** we call upon the administration of Purdue University to make a public and time-bound commitment to adopting renewable energy sources for campus;

***THAT*,** we call upon Purdue University to make a public and time-bound commitment to transition away from fossil fuels for campus operations;

THAT, we call upon Purdue University to include renewable energy alongside any potential future sustainable energy developments (e.g., small modular reactors);

THAT, we call upon Purdue University to demonstrate leadership and reinforce its standing as an innovator by adopting renewable energy and reporting to the Purdue community, on an annual basis, progress towards these goals.

[18] Purdue Student Senate, Resolution 25-11; Purdue Graduate Student Senate, Resolution FA25-R002.