

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 483**

Introduced by Cavanaugh, J., 9.

Read first time January 15, 2021

Committee: Natural Resources

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to climate; to provide duties for the
- 2 University of Nebraska; to transfer funds; and to require reports.
- 3 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1           Section 1. The Legislature finds that:

2           (1) Pests, drought, floods, high winds, and other extreme weather  
3 events present serious, diverse, and ongoing issues for Nebraska. Many  
4 sectors and resources are impacted by such extreme weather, including  
5 agriculture, water, health care, energy generation and usage, ecosystems,  
6 forestry, rural and urban communities, transportation, and commerce and  
7 industry. Nebraska's life-giving water and soil resources continue to be  
8 subject to new stressors and risks;

9           (2) Opportunities exist for the people of Nebraska to respond  
10 appropriately to these risks, including economic opportunities through  
11 development of renewable energy from our abundant wind and solar  
12 resources, biofuels, and nuclear power, through reduction of pollutants,  
13 through efforts to reduce the use of fossil fuels, through strengthened  
14 private property rights by having public input on infrastructure and  
15 reduced eminent domain use, and through development of new technologies,  
16 new agricultural crops and harvesting methods, and new products that  
17 match Nebraska's vibrant and changing needs and resources;

18           (3) The report Understanding and Assessing Climate Change:  
19 Implications for Nebraska, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2014, provides  
20 a fundamental basis for understanding the impacts of extreme weather  
21 events or climate change for our state;

22           (4) The 2015 Nebraska Rural Poll found that sixty-one percent of  
23 rural Nebraskans agree or strongly agree that the state should develop a  
24 plan to address the impacts of extreme weather events or climate change;

25           (5) Appropriate planning is needed to develop strategies to mitigate  
26 and adapt to the impacts of extreme weather events or climate change on  
27 the health and well-being of Nebraskans;

28           (6) The state must invest in research and data gathering, planning,  
29 education, and coordination of efforts related to mitigation of and  
30 adaptation to the impacts of extreme weather events or climate change;

31 and

1       (7) An effective plan to meet the challenges of extreme weather  
2 events or climate change will enable the state and its communities to  
3 take advantage of opportunities resulting from adaptation and mitigation  
4 strategies, including attracting new businesses and investment to  
5 Nebraska, as well as reducing the potential negative impacts of extreme  
6 weather events or climate change.

7       Sec. 2. (1) The University of Nebraska shall develop an evidence-  
8 based, data-driven, strategic action plan to provide methods for adapting  
9 to and mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events or climate  
10 change, including:

11       (a) A baseline measurement of greenhouse gas emissions, also called  
12 a carbon footprint, of the state;

13       (b) Measurable benchmarks and goals, including actions needed to  
14 meet the goals and benchmarks;

15       (c) Assessment of risks and vulnerabilities from negative impacts of  
16 climate change;

17       (d) Opportunities presented by strategies for adaptation and  
18 mitigation of the impacts of climate change;

19       (e) Opportunities to improve and increase resilience to the impacts  
20 of climate change;

21       (f) Potential economic impacts of climate change, both positive and  
22 negative;

23       (g) Examination of impacts of climate change upon the following  
24 sectors:

25       (i) Agriculture;

26       (ii) Water resources;

27       (iii) Health care and public health;

28       (iv) Energy generation and use;

29       (v) Ecosystems and forestry;

30       (vi) Rural and urban communities;

31       (vii) Transportation; and

1           (viii) Commerce and industry; and

2           (h) Recommendations for new policies and changes to policies and  
3 programs that support the goals based on the information and data  
4 collected and generated, including funding needs and recommendations for  
5 legislation.

6           (2) The process for developing the action plan shall include:

7           (a) Extensive opportunities for public comment and engagement,  
8 including, but not limited to, online input, public hearings, and public  
9 and private sector engagement;

10          (b) Input from entomological, climate, water, agricultural, and  
11 natural resource experts in Nebraska;

12          (c) Examination of comparable strategic action plans from other  
13 states; and

14          (d) Such other activities as may be deemed necessary.

15          (3) The State Treasurer, at the direction of the budget  
16 administrator of the budget division of the Department of Administrative  
17 Services, shall transfer an amount not to exceed two hundred and fifty  
18 thousand dollars in total from the Petroleum Release Remedial Action  
19 Collection Fund to the University of Nebraska on or before December 15,  
20 2022.

21          (4) On or before December 15, 2022, the University of Nebraska shall  
22 submit the action plan to the Governor and electronically to the  
23 Executive Board of the Legislative Council.