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From: John Pitkin
350MA Cambridge Node

JP

To: Cambridge City Council

Cc: City Manager Richard Rossi, Cambridge Peace Commission, Cambridge Community Response Network, Cambridge Commission on Status of Women

October 29, 2015

Climate Adaptation Should Include Support for Refugees from Syria

The **Cambridge Node of 350MA** (www.350MA.org) has voted to join Green Cambridge and Mothers Out Front in endorsing the City Council's call for the Cambridge community acting through the City Manager to support the provision of asylum and resettlement for a reasonable number of refugees from the conflict in Syria. (Policy Order O-36, passed by unanimous vote Sept. 21, 2015)

Even as we prepare to adapt to our own climate vulnerabilities to increased heat, heavier storms, and storm surge flooding, we must also adapt to the emerging obligation to provide refuge and care for people who are uprooted from their homes and communities by climate extremes beyond our borders.

The first step should be to recognize and accept this obligation by finding the resources in our community to provide refuge for a reasonable number of refugees from Syria.

2015 OCT 29 PM 3:49
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

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From: Green Cambridge
P.O. Box 380932
Cambridge, MA 02238

2015 OCT 22 PM 2 19
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

To: Cambridge City Council

Cc: City Manager Richard Rossi, Cambridge Peace Commission, Cambridge Community Response Network, Cambridge Commission on Status of Women

October 21, 2015

Climate Adaptation Should Include Support for Refugees from Syria

We join the City Council's call for the Cambridge community acting through the City Manager to support the provision of asylum and resettlement for a reasonable number of refugees from the conflict in Syria. (Policy Order O-36, passed by unanimous vote Sept. 21, 2015)

Climate change and disruption are among the factors that have pushed an estimated 60 million refugees worldwide to abandon their homes, communities and countries. Extreme climate conditions have displaced many other people who are not included in this count of refugees.

But those fleeing conflicts are refugees by any definition, and a study published by the National Academy of Sciences in March[1] concluded that "human influences on the climate system are implicated in the current Syrian conflict." For four years before that war broke out, Syria experienced its worst drought on record. During the drought "water shortages killed livestock, drove up food prices, sickened children, and forced 1.5 million rural residents to the outskirts of Syria's cities" which were already crowded with refugees from the war in Iraq. These uprooted, impoverished people contributed to the political unrest and uprising that sparked the war, and the study found that a long, severe drought in the region "has become more than twice as likely as a consequence of human interference in the climate system."

Therefore, residents of Cambridge, like all citizens of developed nations, have some responsibility for Syrian refugees due to the direct and indirect impacts of our activities on the climate system. This responsibility is above and beyond the universal humanitarian obligation to aid the innocent victims of conflicts.

Even as we prepare to adapt to our own climate vulnerabilities to increased heat, heavier storms, and storm surge flooding, we must also adapt to the emerging obligation to provide refuge and care for people who are uprooted from their homes and communities by climate extremes beyond our borders.

The first step should be to recognize and accept this obligation by finding the resources in our community to provide refuge for a reasonable number of refugees from Syria.

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[1] Colin P. Kelley, et.al. 2015. Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought. Proceedings of the National Academy of Science. vol. 112 no. 11.

Submitted by John Pitkin, VP, Green Cambridge