HAMILTON CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION CHARTER

We ……………………………………………………………………...the undersigned agree that:

A) Climate change is seriously affecting Earth’s climate and is having increasingly negative impacts on Hamilton’s residents, environments, and economy, and other communities around the world.

B) We need to take responsibility and act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change impacts in ways that promote economic prosperity, health and environmental benefits for all.

C) It is important for individuals and organizations to share ideas and best practices and coordinate efforts to accomplish these goals as effectively as possible.

We……………………………………………………………………………………………commit to:

1) Keep informed of new information on climate change and its impacts in order to understand risks and effects on us as individuals and organizations.

   - Staying abreast of most recent findings from the academic literature on climate change and best practices from other institutions through academic journals, consultation with the academic and research community as well as sustainability ambassadors on and off campus. In addition, representation on municipal committees and community organizations focused on sustainability and climate change fosters information sharing.

2) Establish a baseline measurement of our current contribution to climate change through our activities.

   - McMaster’s initial Greenhouse Gas Inventory was conducted in 2009 for the baseline year of 2007.

3) Set significant specific targets for reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, identifying where we will focus our efforts to achieve those targets.

   - In 2010 McMaster released its first Climate Action Plan which outlines focus areas, reduction goals, as well as initiatives and strategies to meet the stated goals. The first report and amendment to this plan will be released in the winter of 2011.

4) Take personal responsibility for these climate change commitments, and in the case of businesses or organizations assign responsibility to a senior individual. Collaborate with other groups, individuals, organizations, and businesses to address causes and consequences of climate change.

   - Members of the McMaster community are provided with opportunities to make strides towards sustainability on an individual basis such as by offering
infrastructure for the use of sustainable modes of transportation, as well as bins and education to support proper recycling on campus. Students are provided with opportunities to get involved academically or through extracurricular activities. Programs such as the Sustainability Ambassador Program, Residence-Wide Energy Challenge, and the Sustainability Internship Program are just a few of the ways that staff, faculty and students can take responsibility and make an individual commitment.

- McMaster has created an Office of Sustainability and Manager of University Sustainability to coordinate campus sustainability efforts. The position reports to the Vice President (Administration) through the Chief Risk Officer. The Sustainability Steering Committee reports to the Board of Governors through the Vice President (Administration). The President has signed three sustainability accords on behalf of the University, one of which is focused on climate action specifically. McMaster has a university-wide Sustainability Policy.

- McMaster holds representation on a number of municipal and community committees related to sustainability and climate changes including: Hamilton Transportation Management Association, which focuses on increasing the rates of sustainable transportation within the City; The Climate Change Action Working Group, which a working group of Clean Air Hamilton focused on creating this Climate Action Charter and engaging members of the community to take part; and Sustainable Hamilton, which focuses on helping businesses to manage, measure, and report their impact on environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

5) Report annually to the community and celebrate successes in reducing emissions and/or creating resiliency in response to climate change impacts during Hamilton’s Climate Change Action Month in October.

- McMaster releases a Campus Sustainability Annual Report each October, for which the final draft will be sent to Clean Air Hamilton for inclusion and/or reference to within their report.

6) Engage, educate, and involve individuals, families, groups, businesses, organizations, and other entities to also commit to this Charter and work collectively to address climate change.

- McMaster will share this charter with the internal and external committees for which the charter is relevant to, as well as will post a page online and encourage individuals and groups to take part in by becoming signatory to.

(Name & Signature) (Organization)
EXPLANATORY NOTES

Signing the Hamilton Climate Change Action Charter is a way to show commitment to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change. It represents a broad public statement that any Hamilton individual or organization can make. There are no pre-signing requirements, however signing the Charter indicates a commitment to take action.

1. **Keep informed**: Information about climate change is continually emerging. Signatories need to stay informed of the impacts of climate change to be aware of opportunities and risks.

2. **Establish a baseline**: Activities that cause greenhouse gas emissions include energy use, transportation, water use, and waste generation. Measuring our current carbon footprint provides a baseline against which to measure improvements. It also helps identify areas where we can create the greatest possible benefit, which makes it easier to set realistic plans and targets.

3. **Set targets**: The Charter enables signatories to set their own targets. Ambitious goals are encouraged.

4. **Take personal responsibility and collaborate**: By signing the Charter, individuals and organizations join a common effort to address climate change in Hamilton. Senior leadership encourages cultural change and commitment to action within an organization.

5. **Report and celebrate annually**: Signatories should show their progress in meeting their Charter commitments. October is Hamilton’s Climate Change Action month, providing an opportunity for signatories to showcase their achievements and learn from each other.

6. **Engage, educate, and involve**: Education about climate change and its impacts promotes public understanding, and encourages us to reduce our Greenhouse Gas emissions and become more resilient.