

Environmental Commission



Recommendations to Council

April 7, 2020



About the Environmental Commission

- **Formed by Chapter 2, Article V, Section 2-96 of the LFUCG Code of Ordinances.**
- **Advises the mayor, the council, the planning commission, and all other appropriate bodies concerning the environment and environmental policies of the community.**
- **Currently 35 Commissioners representing all districts of Lexington/Fayette County.**

Commission's Current Objectives

- **Develop a sustainability plan focusing on Lexington's contribution to carbon emissions and climate change and implement the *Empower Lexington Plan***
- **Reduce waste by focusing on single-use plastics**

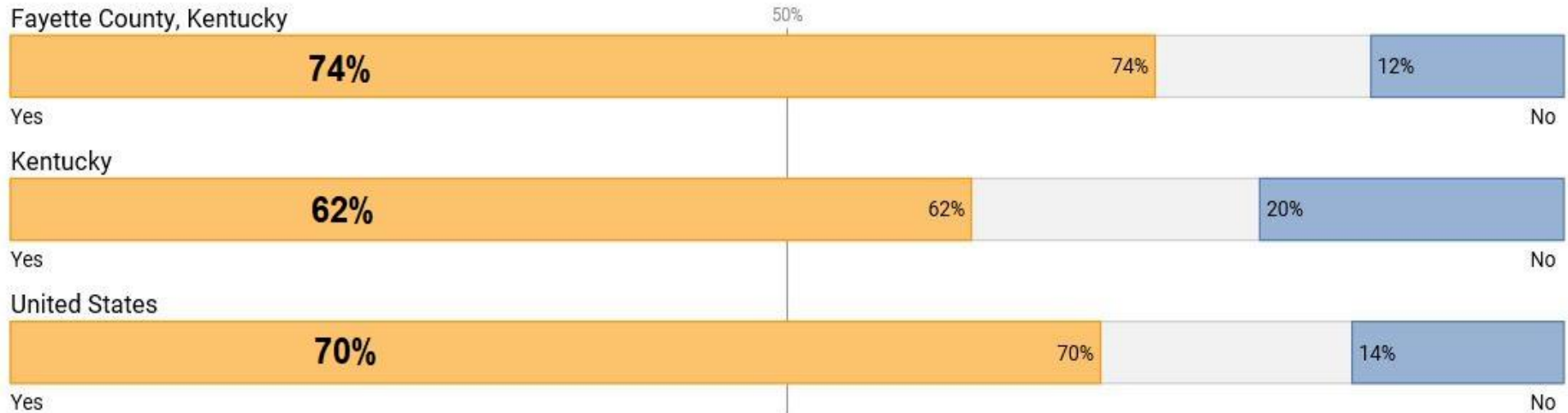
Rationale

- **Public recognizes importance of greenhouse gas emissions and reducing energy use**
 - Environmental Commission
 - University of Kentucky
 - Bluegrass GreenSource
 - Solarize Lexington
- **Save money by reducing energy use**



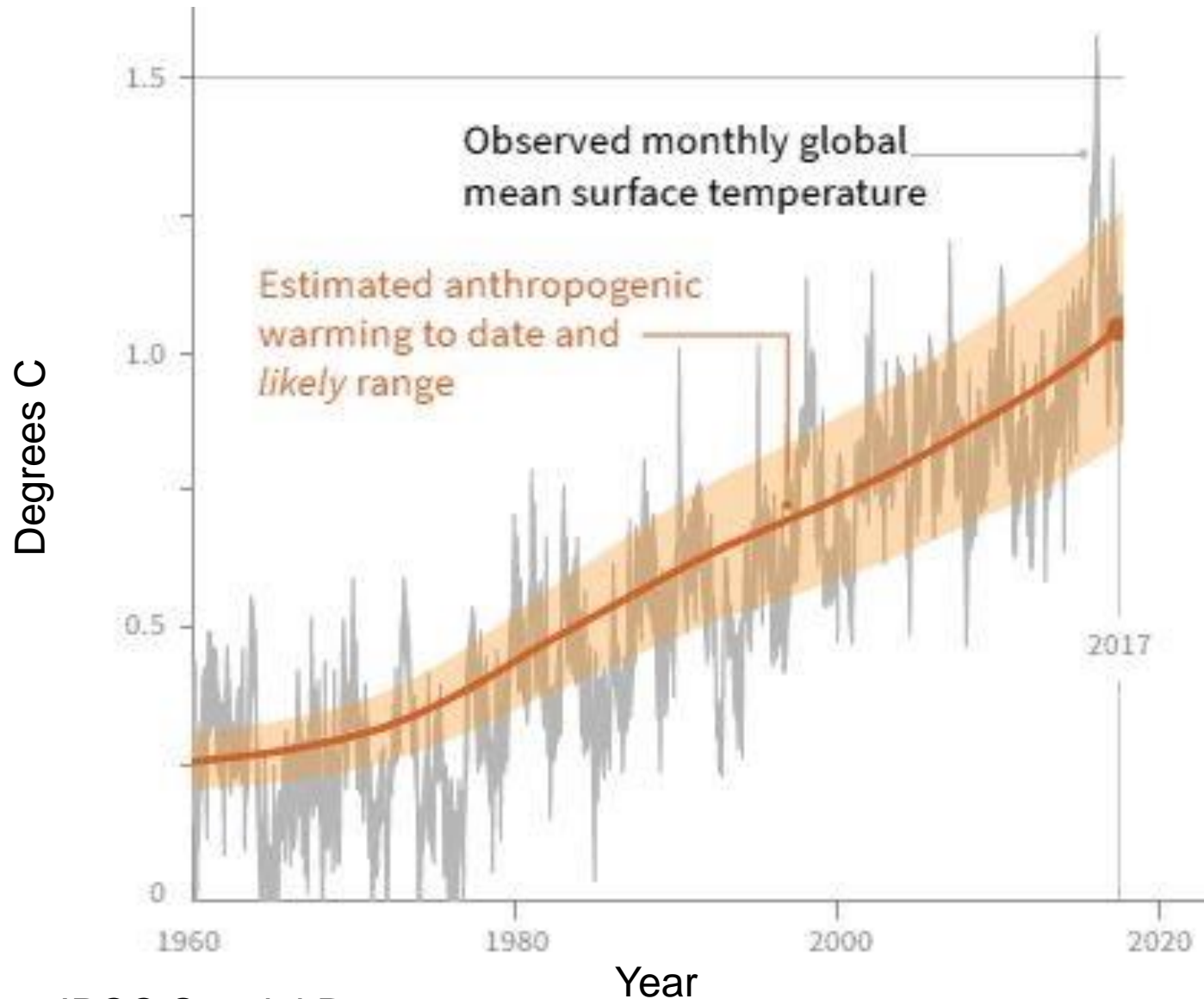
Survey of Public Opinion

Estimated % Adults Who Think Global Warming is Happening, 2018



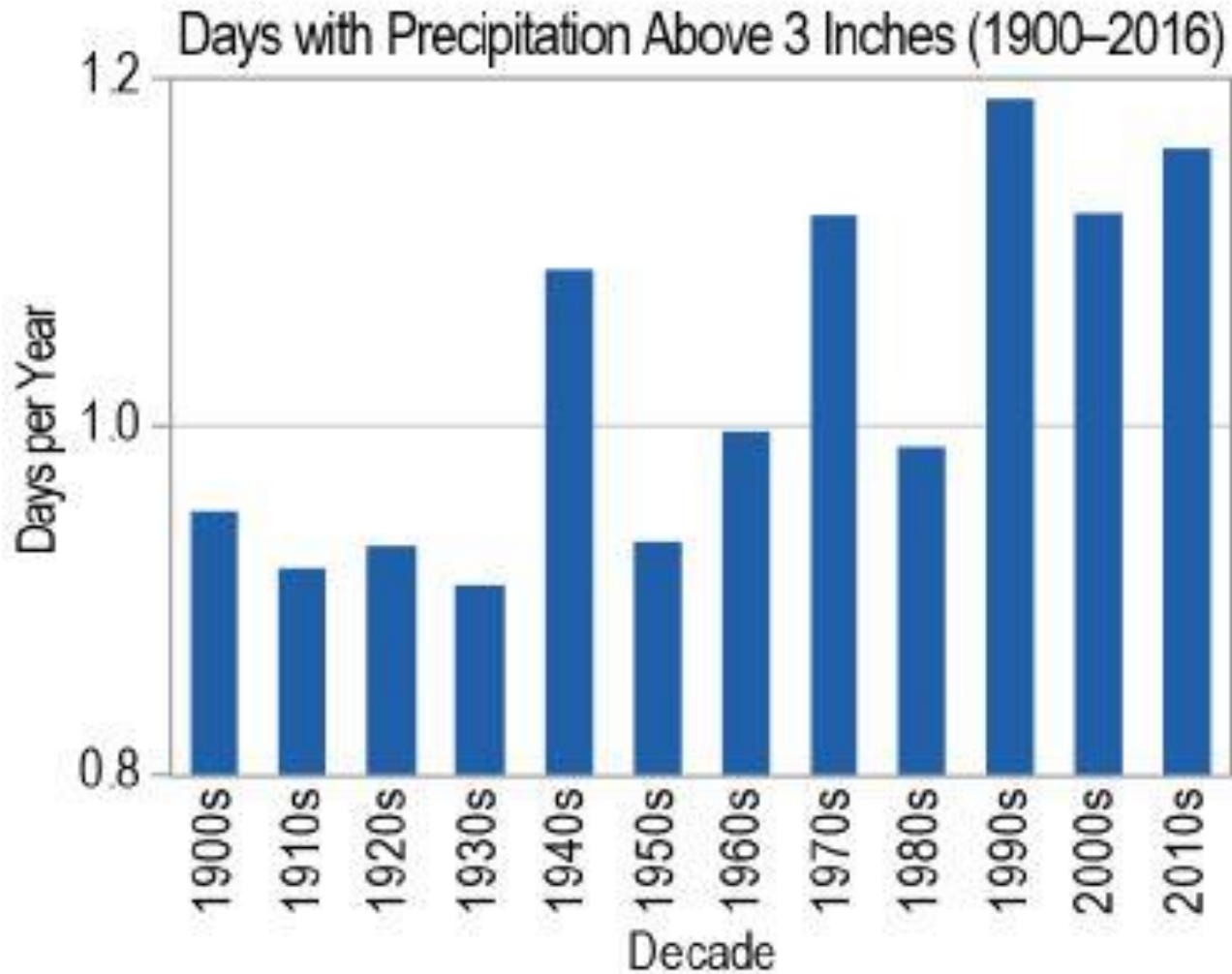
Source: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication

Increasing Global Surface Temperatures



Source: IPCC Special Report

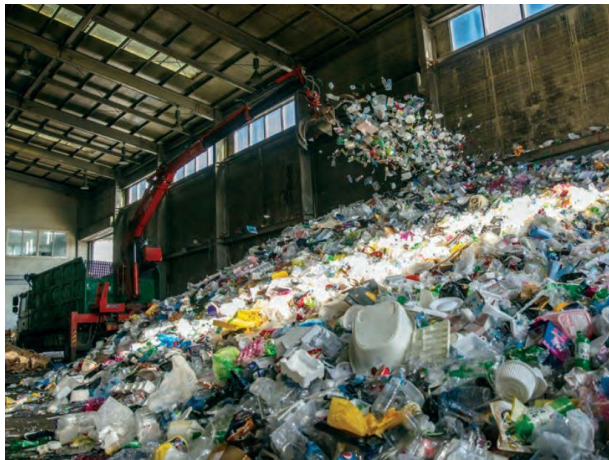
Changes in Precipitation Southeastern United States



Source: Fourth National Climate Assessment

Plastics, Energy Use, and Greenhouse Gases

- **Single-Use Plastics involve energy use and result in greenhouse gas emissions in all phases of their life cycle:**
 - **Extraction and Transport**
 - **Refining and Manufacture**
 - **Decomposition**
 - **Waste Disposal**



Plastics Are a Local Problem

- **Estimated 15% to 22% of weight of materials to landfill are plastics**
- **Others “escape”**

PLASTIC BAGS*
PLASTIC COATINGS*
PLASTIC FURNITURE*
PLASTIC SHEETS*
PLASTIC FITTINGS*
PLASTIC TANKS*
PLASTIC TOYS*
PLASTIC BUCKETS*
PLASTIC SANITARYWARE*
PLASTIC STATIONERY*



Plastics Are a Local Problem

- **Plastic films, bags, and durable plastics**
 - Disposal problem
 - Escape and clog waterways and storm systems
 - Breakdown to form
- **Microplastics (size < 5mm)**
 - Deposited in soil and water
 - Potential health hazards



Implement

Empower Lexington

- **Citizen concern**
- **Mayor's initiative - 2005**
 - U. S. Conference of Mayors:
Climate Protection Agreement
- **Council's "Cities for Climate Protection Program" - 2008**
- **LFUCG and Community Input**

LFUCG, Businesses, Utilities, Trade Groups,
Schools and Universities, Community
Advocacy Groups represented by 50 participants
- **Council adopted resolution supporting**
Empower Lexington Plan - 2012



The Plan's Five Sectors

Refer to two-page summary

- Residential
- Transportation
- Industrial/Commercial/
Institutional
- Land Use/Food/Agriculture
- Waste





Our Recommendations

Proposed Actions for the Council and LFUCG

- **For the Council to designate one or more Council Members to participate regularly in meetings of the Environmental Commission**
- **The LFUCG to appoint, hire, or designate a staff member to assist the Commission in educating residents of Fayette County about energy use and conservation, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change**

Actions by Environmental Commission

- **Working with the designated staff member, the Commission will:**
 - **Identify neighborhoods and existing housing types with greatest potential for energy savings**
 - **Identify techniques and resources for lower-income areas**
 - **Communicate these needs and resources to landlords, neighborhood associations, residents, and others**

Actions by Environmental Commission

- **Provide advice to the LFUCG key policy initiatives to promote energy conservation**
- **Potential policies include:**
 - **Property tax rebates or other incentives for energy use improvements**
 - **Building code or other requirements to foster energy conservation**
 - **Subsidies for adopting energy efficient methods**
 - **Innovations in waste disposal and recycling to reduce energy use**

Actions by Environmental Commission

- **Provide web-based resources and educational materials on:**
 - **Energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change**
 - **Plastics pollution, importance of plastics pollution in Lexington and central Kentucky, and methods to reduce plastic waste**

Actions by Environmental Commission

- **Organize an annual meeting of area stakeholders to discuss progress on these two key areas:**
 - **Energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change**
 - **Plastics pollution, importance of plastics pollution in Lexington and central Kentucky, and methods to reduce plastic waste**

Conclusion

- **We request the Urban County Council to endorse the Environmental Commission's initiatives:**
 - **To implement the *Empower Lexington Plan*, focusing on reducing energy use in the residential sector**
 - **To reduce single-use plastic products to combat plastics pollution**