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Making Ecosia the default search engine for Penn State

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Whereas, The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments (CCSG) recognizes the crucial role of reforestation in the global and local efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change. Forests sequester approximately 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the atmosphere every year, accounting for 30% of anthropogenic CO_2 emissions; however, deforestation has outpaced the rate of reforestation efforts, resulting in a net loss of 10 billion trees per year [1][2][3];

Whereas, One of the Pennsylvania State University's primary objectives, as outlined in its 2016-2025 Strategic Plan, is to "be a leader in addressing and solving this challenge [climate change]"[4]. In order to follow through with this commitment, Penn State must address the danger deforestation poses to the natural world, as it endangers Earth's capacity for storing the most prevalent greenhouse gas, and must include reforestation measures as part of the University's future climate action efforts;

Whereas, CCSG understands Penn State has formed several corporate partnerships to create comprehensive climate solutions that align with its target emissions reduction goal of 80% GHG reduction below 1990 levels by 2050[5], such as the Lightsource BP and Alternative Energy Development Group solar projects.

Whereas, Ecosia, an internet search engine with a CO_2-negative business model that is powered by Microsoft's Bing, donates 80% of its profits to nonprofit organizations that directly contribute to global reforestation projects[6]. By estimation, internet users who conduct online searches through Ecosia plant one tree after 45 searches. Furthermore, a University partnership with Ecosia has the potential to plant tens of thousands of trees through search engine usage alone if applied to all on-campus devices across the Commonwealth.

Whereas, Through effective marketing tactics and tracking the overall amount of web searches across the Commonwealth, such a partnership would benefit the

University and the student body. Students would be actively aware of their positive impact on the environment and the climate crisis as they search the web via on-campus internet capable devices. Over time, Penn State would be able to account for how many trees have planted through the web searches conducted through on-campus devices. The amount of CO_2 sequestered by these trees could then be included in Penn State's carbon offsets, furthering its progress towards a net-zero carbon emissions institution.

Be it resolved, The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments requests the Pennsylvania State University to form a partnership with the company *Ecosia GmbH* and utilize its search engine technology on all on-campus devices to help offset the University's CO_2 emissions and meet its climate goals.

Respectfully,

Matthew Long

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Council Action   Vote __: __: __   Pass: __ Fail:_____Postponed: _

Presidential Action   Approved: Veto: _____

Date: __ / __ /_____

[1] Bellassen, Valentin, and Sebastiaan Luyssaert. "Carbon Sequestration: Managing Forests in Uncertain Times." *Nature*, vol. 506, no. 7487, 2014, pp. 153–155.

[2] Henkel, Marlon. *21st Century Homestead: Sustainable Agriculture III: Agricultural Practices*. Lulu.com. p. 126. ISBN 978-1-312-93975-2.

[3] "Global Forest Resource Assessment 2020". *www.fao.org*.

[4] "Stewarding Our Planet's Resources." *Our Commitment to Impact*, strategicplan.psu.edu/plan/thematic-priorities/stewarding-our-planets-resources/.

[5] "Climate Action." *Sustainability.psu.edu*, www.sustainability.psu.edu/climate-action.

[6] "How does Ecosia neutralize a search's CO2 emissions?". *Zendesk*