

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Action: Resolution 5064 in Support of Reducing Greenhouse Gas Pollution under the Clean Air Act

Meeting Date: July 9, 2012
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: 7
Contact Telephone Number: 541-682-5882

ISSUE STATEMENT

This is an opportunity for the City Council to consider and take action on a resolution supporting a reduction of greenhouse gas pollution under the Clean Air Act.

BACKGROUND

Support for council action on this resolution was expressed during public testimony at City Council meetings and in email communications.

Councilor Zelenka has requested that this item be brought to the council for consideration.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

None.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

The council may adopt the resolution, modify the resolution, or decline to adopt the resolution.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager has no recommendation on this item.

SUGGESTED MOTION

I move to adopt Resolution 5064 in support of reducing greenhouse gas pollution under the Clean Air Act.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Proposed Resolution

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION UNDER THE CLEAN AIR ACT.**The City Council of the City of Eugene finds that:**

A. The decade from 2000 to 2010 was the warmest on record, and 2005 and 2010 tied for the hottest years on record.

B. The current level of CO₂ in the atmosphere is approximately 392 parts per million (ppm).

C. In 2008, one of the world's leading climate scientists, Dr. James Hansen, stated: "If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted, paleoclimate evidence and climate change suggest that CO₂ will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm (now 4 years later at 392 ppm) to at most 350 ppm."

D. The Environmental Protection Agency determined that current and future greenhouse gas concentrations endanger public health, and according to the Global Humanitarian Forum, climate change is already responsible every year for some 300,000 deaths, seriously affecting 325 million people, and economic losses worldwide of \$US 125 billion.

E. Extreme weather events most notably heat waves and precipitation extremes, are striking with increased frequency, with deadly consequences for people and wildlife; in the United States in 2011 alone, a record 14 weather and climate disasters occurred, including droughts, heat waves, and floods, that cost at least \$US 1 billion each in damages and loss of human lives.

F. Climate change is threatening food security as crop growth and yields diminish and droughts, floods and changes in snowpack depth are disrupting water supplies.

G. Scientists have concluded that by 2100, as many as one in ten species may be on the verge of extinction due to climate change.

H. The world's land-based ice is rapidly melting, threatening water supplies in many regions and raising sea levels, and Arctic summer sea ice extent has decreased to about half what it was several decades ago, with an accompanying drastic reduction in sea-ice thickness and volume, which is severely jeopardizing ice-dependent animals like polar bears.

I. Sea level is rising faster along the U.S. East Coast than it has for at least 2,000 years, is accelerating in pace, and could rise by one to two meters in this century, threatening millions of Americans with severe flooding.

J. For four decades, the Clean Air Act has protected the air we breathe through a proven, comprehensive, successful system of pollution control that saves lives and creates economic benefits exceeding its costs by many times.

K. With the Clean Air Act, air quality in this country has improved significantly since 1970, despite major growth both in our economy and industrial production.

L. Between 1970 and 1990, the six main pollutants covered by the Clean Air Act — particulate matter and ground-level ozone (both of which contribute to smog and asthma), carbon monoxide, lead, sulfur and nitrogen oxides (the pollutants that cause acid rain) — were reduced by between 47 percent and 93 percent, and airborne lead was virtually eliminated.

M. The Clean Air Act has produced economic benefits valued at \$2 trillion or 30 times the cost of regulation.

N. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Massachusetts vs. EPA* (2007) that greenhouse gases are “air pollutants” as defined by the Clean Air Act and the Environmental Protection Agency has the authority to regulate them.

O. The City of Eugene prides itself on being a leader in the fight for clean air, and against climate change by signing on to the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, creating our award-winning Community Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP), and establishing Council goals to become carbon neutral in City-owned facilities and operations by 2020, and to reduce community-wide fossil fuel use 50% by 2030.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EUGENE, a Municipal Corporation of the State of Oregon, as follows:

Section 1. Climate change is not an abstract problem for the future or one that will affect only far-distant places; but rather, climate change is happening now, we are causing it, and the longer we wait to act, the more we lose and the more difficult and more expensive the problem will be to solve.

Section 2. President Barack Obama and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Lisa P. Jackson, are hereby urged to move swiftly to fully employ and enforce the Clean Air Act to do our part to reduce carbon in our atmosphere to no more than 350 parts per million.

Section 3. This resolution shall be sent to President Obama, EPA Administrator Jackson, Senators Wyden and Merkley, Congressman DeFazio, and our state legislative delegation; and the City shall lobby on its behalf where appropriate.

Section 4. This Resolution is effective immediately upon its passage by the City Council.

The foregoing Resolution adopted the ____ day of _____, 2012.

CLEAN AIR CITIES CAMPAIGN

The Center for Biological Diversity's Climate Law Institute has launched "Clean Air Cities," a nationwide campaign urging cities around the United States to call on the Obama administration and the EPA to use the Clean Air Act to make significant reductions in greenhouse gas pollution.

The equation is simple: If we want clean air and a healthy climate, we have to cut greenhouse gas pollution. The Clean Air Act is our current best hope to reach this goal in the United States. But the Act is under significant attack from the fossil fuel industry and its allies in Congress.

It's clear that climate change is here now and already having a profound effect on the places we live, the natural resources we depend on and the species that provide rich biodiversity around the planet. We need to take significant steps now to curb greenhouse gas pollution and avoid the worst effects of runaway global climate change.

Cities across the country can be a powerful voice for prompting action in Washington. That's why the Center is calling on volunteers from coast to coast to urge their local elected officials to pass resolutions in support of the EPA using the Clean Air Act to reduce carbon in our atmosphere to no more than 350 parts per million — the level scientists say is needed to avoid catastrophic climate change. So far, we've earned resolutions from 26 cities:

Chicago, IL
Seattle, WA
Philadelphia, PA;
Pittsburgh, PA
Cincinnati OH
Tampa, FL
Kansas City, MO
Salt Lake City, UT
Boulder, CO.

Milwaukee, WI
Madison, WI
Albany, NY
Minneapolis, MN
Berkeley, CA
Cambridge, MA
Tucson, AZ;
Santa Monica, CA
Arcata, CA

Oxnard, CA
Santa Cruz, CA
Richmond, CA
Boone, NC
Northampton, MA
Oberlin, OH
Pinecrest, FL,
Gulfport, FL
Santa Fe, NM

The Center is providing all the materials needed, including a sample city resolution and supporting documents. There's also an online community through our Facebook page, where you can provide updates, ask questions and get support from other volunteers. We can connect you with others in your community and support you every step of the way.