

MOTION

ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & RIVER

Climate change is a rapidly-worsening global emergency already affecting communities throughout Los Angeles, particularly low-income renters and communities of color, who disproportionately experience the impacts of extreme heat, pollution, and environmental degradation. Decades of local, state, and federal policy have placed unequal burdens on these communities while affording benefits to others. Without equity-focused policy intervention, climate change will only exacerbate these historic environmental injustices.

The City must expand its bold efforts to eradicate the existing pollution that plagues vulnerable communities and thereby combat climate change. Building decarbonization, a city-wide goal outlined in L.A.'s Green New Deal, represents one of the biggest opportunities to accomplish both goals. In Los Angeles, buildings account for 43% of all carbon emissions - more than any other sector.

However, many well-meaning policies to combat climate change and pollution have left low-income communities with higher energy bills and worse air quality due to a disparity in access to energy efficiency programs. In addition, the loss of jobs in multiple sectors that are replaced with 'green' jobs do not guarantee high quality employment, particularly for the communities that have historically been excluded from such career opportunities.

Thoughtful consideration must also be taken to prevent exacerbation of Los Angeles' housing and homelessness crisis. According to a 2019 study of LA's Promise Zones in Central and South L.A., 73% of renters are "housing burdened," and, according to a 2020 study by the American Council for an Energy-Efficiency Economy, 21% of renters are "energy burdened." Across the City, many renters are on the brink of displacement as a result of COVID-19-related job loss. Existing City laws and programs allow landlords to pass the upfront costs of building improvements onto tenants. Safeguards must therefore be put in place to prevent unintended negative consequences of decarbonization, such as increased rent burden, housing unaffordability, and displacement.

In order for climate legislation to succeed in making truly positive change, frontline communities should be front and center in the policy-making process and City leaders should pursue energy and housing justice principles that prevent future harm and proactively benefit communities that have suffered disproportionate historic burdens. Taking into account key energy and housing justice principles, the City's building decarbonization efforts should:

- Not lead to evictions, rent burden, energy burden, harassing conduct against tenants, or displacement; thereby exacerbating our homelessness crisis;
- Not replace carbon-based infrastructure with technologies that create other local air, environmental, or climate pollutants;
- Equitably distribute the benefits and burdens of the transition;
- Ensure that decarbonization technologies and information will be accessible and affordable for all, and will ensure that the communities with the worst pollution and climate burdens reap the full benefits;
- Be informed and shaped by the needs and priorities of local communities and experts, leveraging local networks and expertise to ensure equitable and effective adoption;
- Create jobs that are well-paid and unionized, where targeted local hiring will ensure a just transition for workers from impacted industries and historically excluded communities;
- Ensure that energy efficiency improvements decrease energy burdens in historically-excluded communities and provide real bill savings at no additional cost.

The Climate Emergency Mobilization Office (CEMO), which was established to incorporate the voices of vulnerable communities into policy decisions, will ensure that outreach to and input from vulnerable and frontline communities is adequate to design equitable policies. The CEMO is preparing to host a series of Community Assemblies in early 2022 to discuss technical and regulatory strategies to decarbonize buildings and to collect community feedback and recommendations on setting and achieving aggressive citywide building decarbonization goals, in alignment with energy justice and housing justice principles.

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I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office to:

- Incorporate findings from its Community Assemblies and report back within 120 days with recommendations for the implementation of all carbon emission elimination strategies in new and existing buildings in the City of LA in accordance with the energy and housing justice principles listed above; and,
- Work with the Climate Emergency Commission and other stakeholders as articulated above to identify equity metrics and goals for measuring community benefits and burdens and provide policy recommendations for distributing the benefits and burdens of the building transition equitably.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the Department of Building and Safety to:

- Participate in the CEMO Community Assemblies with attention toward integrating recommendations into strategies for achieving zero- carbon buildings and report to Council in 120 days on meeting the energy and water efficiency goals outlined in LA's Green New Deal, in accordance with the energy and housing justice principles;
- Conduct a parallel process of engagement with technical experts and key stakeholders from the commercial and institutional buildings sectors, and report back to Council in 120 days on the development of technical recommendations and best practices for revisions to the City's existing Buildings Energy and Water Efficiency ordinance to achieve zero-carbon buildings and meet energy and water efficiency goals;
- In cooperation with the Bureau of Contract Administration and other relevant agencies, consult with workers and labor union representatives for workers in industries impacted by the decarbonization of buildings to develop strategies to mitigate and offset any potential impacts to construction jobs through programs and/or policies that would lead to the creation of new, quality jobs for workers working in impacted industries.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the Housing Department to:

- Participate in the CEMO Community Assemblies with attention toward integrating recommendations and report back on opportunities to strengthen enforcement of housing security provisions alongside decarbonization actions in accordance with the energy and housing justice principles;
- Conduct a parallel process of engagement with multifamily residential buildings stakeholders including apartment owners, affordable housing owners, tenant representatives, and the housing development industry and report back in 120 days with recommendations for meeting zero carbon buildings goals.
- Identify federal, state, and local regulations and policies governing LA's affordable rental housing (including deed-restricted housing, public housing, and naturally- occurring affordable housing) and report back to Council in 120 on laws or policies that may impact the ability of affordable housing providers to conduct transformational building retrofits.
- Identify state and local regulations governing LA's rental housing stock that may allow the costs of building retrofits to be passed onto vulnerable tenants and impact their ability to stay housed and report back within 120 days on ways to change them to better protect tenants.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council request the Department of Water and Power to:

- Participate in the CEMO Community Assemblies with attention toward integrating recommendations into the development of incentive programs for building decarbonization in accordance with the energy and housing justice principles.

PRESENTED BY:



PAUL KORETZ

Councilmember, 5th District



PAUL KERKORIAN

Councilmember, 2nd District



NITHYA RAMAN

Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY:

