



Legislation Text

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**CITY OF SEATTLE**

**RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_**

A RESOLUTION relating to a Green New Deal for Seattle; establishing goals, identifying actions necessary to meet these goals, affirming the federal Green New Deal resolution, and calling for the federal government to enact policies to advance a Green New Deal.

WHEREAS, an October 2018 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states that human beings have only until 2030 to limit devastating global warming and avoid a climate catastrophe; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 IPCC report also states that every bit of warming matters, so every fraction of a degree less of warming will save lives and pay dividends across the world's economies; and

WHEREAS, available climate data indicates that the world is already experiencing impacts from climate change, including more intense storms, unprecedented flooding, and more frequent and longer-burning wildfires; and

WHEREAS, an inadequate response to climate change will increase the risk of economic and environmental disruptions, such as more severe storms, longer and hotter heat waves, worsening flood and drought cycles, growing invasive species and insect problems, accelerated species extinction rates, rising sea levels, increased wildfires, and an increase in environmental migration; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the Seattle City Council ("Council") adopted, with the Mayor concurring, Resolution 30316, supporting efforts to curb global warming, adopting greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals for Seattle, and committing to ongoing efforts to achieve these goals; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) issued the first Seattle Climate Action Plan, which included a suite of actions to reduce GHG emissions; and

WHEREAS, in 2009 The City of Seattle (“City”) established the Race and Social Justice Initiative through Resolution 31164, affirming the City’s race and social justice work and directing City departments to use available tools to assist in the elimination of racial and social disparities across key indicators of success, including health, education, criminal justice, the environment, employment and the economy, and to promote equity within the City workplace and in the delivery of City services; and

WHEREAS, in October 2011, the Council adopted, with the Mayor concurring, Resolution 31312, adopting new climate protection and adaptation goals for Seattle and directing OSE to initiate an update of the Seattle Climate Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, in June 2013, the Council adopted, with the Mayor concurring, Resolution 31447 adopting the Seattle Climate Action Plan, recognizing the increasing threat of global warming and identified actions to achieve City climate goals and other City goals, including transportation choices, building energy efficiency, solid waste reduction, urban forest protection, sustainable economic development, and clean air; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the City launched the Equity and Environment Initiative with the goal of ensuring that all people and communities benefit from Seattle’s environmental progress; communities most affected by environmental injustice are engaged in setting environmental priorities, designing strategies, and tracking progress; and people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, and individuals with limited-English proficiency have opportunities to be part of and leaders in the environmental movement; and

WHEREAS, in February 2015, the Council adopted, with the Mayor concurring, Resolution 31567 affirming the City’s commitment to transparency, equity, and community engagement in the process mandated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for clean-up of the Duwamish River Superfund site, and setting up an interdepartmental team to continue identifying ongoing projects that serve residential, tribal and fishing communities in the Duwamish River Valley, coordinate outreach efforts, and consider

further actions to protect the health of Duwamish River Valley communities; and

WHEREAS, in August 2016, the Council adopted, with the Mayor concurring, Resolution 31681 to advance the efforts of the Equity & Environment Agenda, adopting goals for all environmental and sustainability work in Seattle that prioritize communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low-incomes, youth, and limited-English proficiency individuals; and

WHEREAS, in October 2016, the Council adopted, with the Mayor concurring, Resolution 31712, endorsing community principles for green jobs, defining a green job as one that preserves or enhances environmental health as well as the economic and social well-being of people and communities, centers on communities most negatively impacted by climate change, and pays a living wage while providing career pathways; and

WHEREAS, in June 2017, the Council adopted, with the Mayor concurring, Resolution 31757, affirming the City's commitment to meet or exceed goals established in the Paris Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the City's 2018 Climate Action Strategy identifies the actions necessary for Seattle to contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

WHEREAS, the 2016 Greenhouse Gas Inventory, published in February 2019, found that total greenhouse gas emissions in Seattle rose by one percent between 2014 and 2016, and that in order to achieve the goals of the Climate Action Plan, Seattle's emissions reductions rate needs to increase by a factor of seven; and

WHEREAS, the 2013 Duwamish Valley Cumulative Health Impacts Analysis (CHIA) found that communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, and limited English-proficient individuals tend to live, work, play, and learn in specific geographic areas in Seattle, and communities in these geographic areas are impacted by socio-economic and environmental challenges, including the impacts of air pollution, industrial polluters, major roadways, food hardship, and food deserts and that residents in these geographic areas have a 48 percent higher asthma risk than the rest of the city; and

WHEREAS, the 2013 Duwamish Valley CHIA also found that residents of South Park and Georgetown have an expected lifespan that is eight years shorter than the average Seattle resident and 13 years shorter than the wealthiest neighborhoods in the city and that 58 percent of the population living within one mile of the Lower Duwamish Superfund boundary are people of color; and

WHEREAS, the New Deal demonstrated that federal government actions, such as investing in infrastructure and housing, creating employment programs, regulating financial institutions, and bolstering the labor movement, can be effective in significantly reducing poverty and income inequality; however, the New Deal's lack of focus on racial equity resulted in worsening existing racial and economic disparities, with long-term negative impacts to the economic mobility and security of communities of color, especially Black and Native communities; and

WHEREAS, decades of *de facto* and *de jure* racial discrimination in housing, education, and employment have prevented people of color from benefitting fully from public investments and programs; and

WHEREAS, the greatest and most harmful impacts of climate change are falling disproportionately on lower-income communities and communities of color globally; however, these communities have contributed the least to the cumulative global emissions that are causing climate change and are least equipped to adapt to the impacts; and

WHEREAS, because the United States has emitted more global GHGs since the Industrial Revolution than any other nation, the United States and its cities have a moral obligation to make significant cuts to emissions and invest in building the resilience of vulnerable communities on the frontlines of climate change locally and globally; and

WHEREAS, doing what is now necessary to adequately address the climate crisis requires a national mobilization of a scope and scale that presents a historic opportunity to address inequities caused and exacerbated by the fossil fuel economy and eliminate poverty in the United States; and

WHEREAS, spurred by the advocacy of climate justice activists and other community organizers, New York

Congressmember Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez sponsored House Resolution 109 calling for a federal Green New Deal, with 94 United States Congressmembers cosponsoring; and

WHEREAS, the federal Green New Deal resolution directs the federal government to create a detailed mobilization plan to eliminate GHG emissions by 2030, invest in communities on the frontlines of poverty and pollution, and guarantee a good job to anyone ready; and

WHEREAS, local governments calling for the federal government to pass a Green New Deal will help to demonstrate widespread popular support for necessary and just climate action; NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:**

Section 1. The City of Seattle (“City”) supports policies that promote strong families and communities, including paid family and sick leave, affordable child care, universal health care, and high-quality, free educational opportunities for all as laid out by the federal Green New Deal resolution and urges the United States Congress to pass the Green New Deal.

Section 2. The City recognizes that, while it has made some progress towards reducing its dependence on fossil fuels, that progress is insufficient to make the necessary changes to shift Seattle’s economy to be more equitable and ecologically sustainable.

Section 3. The City envisions a future where Seattle residents can live healthy, prosperous lives, free of toxic chemicals and fossil fuels, and the social and ecological well-being of all people is prioritized over the profit of private corporations.

Section 4. To achieve this vision, the City commits to creating a Green New Deal for Seattle, with the following goals:

A. Make Seattle free of climate pollutants, meaning those that cause shifts in climate patterns, including carbon dioxide, black carbon, methane, nitrogen oxides, and fluorinated gases, by 2030;

B. Prioritize investment in communities historically most harmed by economic, racial, and environmental injustice;

C. Advance an equitable transition from an economy based on extraction and exploitation to one based on regeneration and cooperation, ensuring that those with the least amount of power and wealth are positioned to lead during this transition and are not left behind; and

D. Create stable, well-paying jobs that prioritize local hire and are protected by Project Labor Agreements and Labor Harmony Agreements to ensure high-quality work and fair treatment of workers.

Section 5. Given current and historic oppression that has resulted in specific communities bearing the greatest environmental, racial, and economic inequities, the City is committed to centering the following frontline communities in further work around a Green New Deal for Seattle: Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, immigrants and refugees, low and no income people, houseless people, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, youth, vulnerable elders, and people who work in outdoor occupations. Acknowledging the displacement and historical and current oppression of Native people, the City will explore the creation of Free, Prior, and Informed consent policies with federally recognized tribal nations.

Section 6. The City seeks to create a fund and establish dedicated progressive revenue sources for its Green New Deal, along with an associated accountability body, that will be used to make investments in communities, prioritizing those impacted the most by economic, racial, and environmental injustice, and ensuring that those most impacted are centered in policies and empowered to make decisions. While this fund will be an important resource, the City recognizes that it will also need to leverage other resources, including from the private sector, to achieve its goals and is committed to exploring how the City can partner with the private sector to advance the Green New Deal for Seattle.

Section 7. Energy for heating, cooling, and powering buildings accounted for more than one-third of Seattle's greenhouse gas emissions in 2016. The City supports efforts to limit construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Seattle and King County, and will continue to invest in programs and explore strategies to equitably increase building energy efficiency and decrease use of fossil fuels in homes, such as the following:

A. Encourage weatherization of existing residences, with a focus on renters;

- B. Support the transition from the use of natural gas and heating oil to electricity;
- C. Make renewable energy sources more affordable and develop options for community-scale, community-owned distributed generation of electricity in low-income communities;
- D. Reduce the burden of utility costs for low-income households and ensure that renters are not negatively impacted by conversions to electric heating and appliances;
- E. Strengthen green building standards for new construction to minimize upfront emissions while maximizing energy efficiency;
- F. Support mechanical insulation which provides long-term energy efficiency, emissions reduction, cost savings, and safety benefits; and
- G. Expand Seattle City Light's production of electricity using wind and solar energy for export on energy markets to ultimately replace energy produced by utilities using natural gas, coal, and other fossil fuels.

Section 8. The City recognizes the importance of expanding access to healthy, affordable, locally-produced, and culturally relevant foods to improve community health and reduce reliance on mass-produced, highly-processed foods that contribute to climate pollution and negatively impact public health, and will continue to:

- A. Promote community food production;
- B. Encourage the consumption of more plant-based foods and locally-produced foods;
- C. Explore potential locations on public property where urban agriculture and gardening may be possible; and
- D. Invest Sweetened Beverage Tax proceeds to increase access to healthy foods for residents in the food security gap.

Section 9. Road transportation made up about 62 percent of Seattle's core emissions in 2016, with most of these emissions originating from passenger vehicles and the remainder from medium- and heavy-duty trucks. To reduce transportation-related emissions, the City commits to pursuing the following strategies:

- A. Make transit free, reliable, and widely accessible;
- B. Support efforts by King County Metro to convert all transit vehicles to be fully electric and explore fare-free transit by prioritizing communities for whom affordability is the greatest barrier to transit, while ensuring that service and reliability are not negatively impacted;
- C. Facilitate more transit-oriented development, with at least 25 percent of all such development affordable to those at 30 to 60 percent of area median income;
- D. Create a comprehensive system of dedicated bus lanes and bike lanes across the entire city;
- E. Prioritize use of the public right-of-way for moving people and goods, not for moving single-occupancy vehicles, and conduct all transportation planning and construction accordingly;
- F. Pilot new electric vehicle and transportation projects in communities with the greatest need for transportation options;
- G. Expand transportation options, including connected infrastructure for biking, walking and rolling, to provide viable alternatives to driving;
- H. Create a citywide goal of 100 percent electric vehicles for ride share, carshare, and freight by no later than 2025 and develop a plan for achieving this goal;
- I. Implement a congestion pricing plan only if it is equitable and creates revenue to support transit expansion to benefit low-income, historically marginalized, and transit-disconnected communities first and foremost; and
- J. Encourage City departments and businesses in Seattle to allow employees to telecommute.

Section 10. The City commits to continue implementing comprehensive strategies to mitigate development impacts and prevent displacement of vulnerable communities. In addition to the anti-displacement initiatives identified in Section 2 of Resolution 31870, which the Council adopted concurrently with Ordinance 125791, implementing the mandatory housing affordability program citywide, the City will pursue the following strategies:



- A. Encourage the creation of more housing, particularly affordable housing, locating this housing near transit hubs, green space, and neighborhood amenities to reduce dependence on private vehicles;
- B. Explore anti-displacement strategies and alternative housing models, such as community-owned cooperative housing, community land ownership, and community land conservation that will allow communities to grow and prosper within Seattle, particularly on City-owned land not currently used for housing that could be repurposed to address the housing crisis;
- C. Continue to increase housing density as a means to meet both current unmet demand for affordable housing and projected future population growth;
- E. Require that landlords who participate in City weatherization programs limit rent increases for ten years to ensure that low-income renters are able to remain in place and receive the benefits of weatherization;
- F. Prioritize low-income housing, especially for people earning 30 percent or less than area median income;
- G. Coordinate the City's approach to measuring displacement and risk of displacement to advance anti-displacement efforts, and publish this data on the City's website in a clear and easily-accessible location;
- H. Remove financial barriers and increase outreach regarding accessory dwelling units (ADUs) for low-income homeowners seeking to build an ADU on their property;
- I. Provide support and capacity building to ensure that residents of neighborhoods currently experiencing displacement or at high risk of displacement can engage in conversations with developers regarding proposed projects in their neighborhoods; and
- J. Develop a centralized hub of information and expand outreach to people at risk of displacement;
- K. Collaborate with other public sector partners to massively expand the development and preservation of affordable housing; and
- L. Work with other cities, counties, and statewide organizations to advocate for changes to state law

to provide more tools for local control to stabilize rents.

Section 11. A green economy offers opportunities to transition away from an economy based on extractive industries that degrade the environment and accelerate global warming to a climate pollution-free, resource-efficient economy. Green jobs, as defined by Resolution 31712, can act as a catalyst for the transition to a green economy. To accelerate this transition, the City commits to the following:

A. Providing ongoing investment in a Green Pathways fellowship program that provides career development opportunities for young leaders of color and increases organizational capacity at community-based organizations committed to environmental restoration and justice, using it as a model for expansion to all industry sectors, including City government;

B. Expanding renewable energy jobs and investing in job training programs that equip all workers with the necessary skills to thrive in the green economy and ensure a just transition for workers whose jobs currently depend on the fossil fuel industry (e.g., retraining mechanics to service electric vehicles) and prepare new workers to support the transition to a renewable energy economy;

C. Identifying strategies to establish limits on emissions for businesses, especially industrial businesses, and facilitate a just transition plan for both employers and their workers;

D. Supporting the work of labor unions to protect workers' rights and efforts by workers to unionize; and

E. Strengthening worker protection laws so all workers can benefit, ensuring that all workers are able to make a living wage, and that anyone willing to work is able to find a job.

Section 12. As incinerators and landfills contribute to emissions and poor air quality, have negative environmental and health impacts, and are disproportionately located in or near low-income communities and communities of color, the City commits to continue developing strategies to reduce and eliminate waste, such as reducing the prevalence of single-use plastics.

Section 13. As the global climate warms, Seattle faces potential risks associated with changes to the

climate over time and from increases in the frequency, timing, and severity of extreme weather events that could have significant costs. The City is committed to protecting the health of all its residents, especially those most vulnerable to these changes, and supporting strong, resilient communities. Anticipating these impacts, the City commits to investing in climate preparedness and emergency management, and ensuring that communities likely to be most impacted are actively engaged in and positioned to lead in these preparations. These strategies may include:

- A. Requiring climate impact planning in all infrastructure projects during project design, construction, and long-term maintenance;
- B. Requiring any proposed infrastructure projects that use City funding to provide an estimate of the upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emissions associated with the projects;
- C. Investing in protection and restoration of natural ecosystems that provide vital barriers against extreme weather events;
- D. Creating more green spaces and preserving and adapting existing green spaces to make communities more resilient to floods and extreme heat;
- E. Promoting infrastructure projects that adapt to sea-level rise to help the City prepare for encroachment by the sea;
- F. Fortifying brownfields and other contaminated sites against extreme weather and expediting cleanup of such sites so that they can be used by communities for productive purposes;
- G. Supporting investments in drinking and wastewater systems to ensure that these critical infrastructures continue to protect public health;
- H. Continuing to invest in electrical grid modernization to increase efficiency and reliability;
- I. Providing heat shelters and home air filters for vulnerable populations to protect themselves from more extreme heat and poor air quality days as average summer temperatures and wildfires increase; and
- J. Encouraging preservation and planting of trees citywide to increase the city's tree canopy cover,

prioritizing historically low-canopy and low-income neighborhoods while working closely with communities to protect against eco-gentrification.

Section 14. The City has been an active participant in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-led cleanup and source control efforts along the Duwamish River Superfund site. The City continues to be committed to letting the affected communities lead on planning efforts and developing strategies, such as a job training program, where Duwamish Valley residents can directly engage with cleanup and remediation efforts.

Section 15. The City commits to developing a strategy, such as Green Zones, to prioritize public investments in neighborhoods that have historically been underinvested and disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards and other injustices. Such investments may include, but are not limited to, infrastructure, housing, job training, transit, and education.

Adopted by the City Council the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

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President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

Filed by me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)