



Legislation Text

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**CITY OF SEATTLE**

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

A RESOLUTION establishing the shared city and community goals and strategies of the Equity and Environment Agenda as City policy and a critical aspect and foundation for all environment and sustainability work in Seattle.

WHEREAS, The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies; and

WHEREAS, across the United States, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil; and

WHEREAS, in 2009 the City of Seattle 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 2014 Mayor Murray issued Executive Order 2014-02 affirming his intention to continue the direction of the Initiative, and directing City departments to incorporate a racial equity lens in citywide initiatives and policies such as legislation to increase the minimum wage, efforts to ensure affordable housing, coordinated planning for equitable growth and development, and equity areas including the environment; and

WHEREAS, Seattle is a national environmental leader and the STAR Community Rating System (STAR), which

evaluates the livability and sustainability of U.S. communities, awarded Seattle the highest rating of 5 STAR, the area where Seattle showed the greatest room for improvement was environmental justice; and

WHEREAS, 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 highly impacted by socio-economic and environmental challenges including the impacts of air pollution, industrial polluters, major roadways, heavy industrial polluters, food hardship and food deserts; and

WHEREAS, residents in these geographic areas have a 48% higher asthma risk than the rest of the city; and

WHEREAS, 58% of the population living within one mile of the Lower Duwamish Superfund boundary are people of color; and

WHEREAS, despite the increasing racial diversity in the U.S., people of color make up only 12 to 16 percent of those working in environmental organizations, foundations, and government agencies; and the City faces many of the same challenges as the broader United States environmental movement, including that those who shape and benefit from environmental policies and outcomes are primarily white, upper-income communities; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 Mayor Murray launched the Equity and Environment Initiative (EEI) to deepen Seattle's commitment to race and social justice in the environment and to advance three primary goals: 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 2015 the Mayor convened a sixteen person Community Partners Steering Committee (CPSC) to

ensure that those most-affected by environmental inequities would lead in creating the goals and strategies of the Equity & Environment Agenda and guiding community conversations; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 and 2016 the CPSC members engaged in community conversations with people of color, immigrants, refugees, youth, limited-English proficient individuals and people with low incomes to create an Equity & Environment Agenda jointly held by the City and Community; and

WHEREAS, the CPSC is steadfast in the pursuit of Environmental Justice, redefining environment as not just the natural environment, but also where communities work, worship, play, learn and live; and

WHEREAS, the CPSC believes in environmental solutions that connect to and create economic and educational opportunities so that all communities can thrive. To do this necessitates addressing past systemic injustice while creating proactive, transformational solutions for the future; NOW,

THEREFORE,

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

Section 1. The City of Seattle recognizes the need to lead by example and for government, community, and philanthropy to work together to advance the Equity & Environment Agenda so that all benefit from Seattle's environmental progress. The City of Seattle adopts the following goals as a critical aspect and foundation for all environmental and sustainability work in Seattle:

Healthy Environments for All: Seattle intends to ensure clean, healthy, resilient, and safe environments in the places where communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low-incomes, youth, and limited-English-proficiency individuals live, learn, work, and play. Environmental policies and programs should: leverage community assets; address cumulative impacts of multiple environmental hazards, social, economic and racial burdens; prepare communities to adapt to climate change; increase access to healthy food; and support connections between residents, workers, government agencies, and industries.

Jobs, Local Economies and Youth Pathways: Communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with

low-incomes, youth and limited-English proficiency individuals have pathways out of poverty through green careers, including careers related to environmental policy and program development. Environmental policies and programs invest in young workers, youth pathways, prioritize local hires and small businesses, and create local, living-wage economies.

Equity in City Environmental Programs: Communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with low-incomes, youth and limited-English proficiency individuals should have equitable access, accountability, and decision-making power in environmental policies, programs, and services. These policies and programs should achieve universal environmental gains while maximizing benefits for these populations by building community wealth, leveraging cultural hubs, preserving affordable housing, and minimizing displacement.

Environmental Narrative and Community Leadership: The environmental movement should be led by and centered on the stories and experiences of communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and limited-English-proficiency individuals. Environmental policies and programs should invest directly in the community, support community leaders, promote existing culturally appropriate environmental practices, and leverage the creativity of residents to find solutions.

Section 2. The City of Seattle also recognizes the need for a community-centric approach in implementing the Equity and Environment Agenda. The Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) is directed to work with the Department of Neighborhoods to develop an engagement strategy for these goals.

Section 3. OSE is directed to work with City departments, the City Council, Mayor's Office, and community stakeholders to advance the goals of this resolution and shall provide a report via presentation every 18 months to the City Council to demonstrate progress towards advancing environmental justice within City government and throughout the broader Seattle community.

Adopted by the City Council the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

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

The Mayor concurred the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

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Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Filed by me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

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Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)

ATT A - Seattle Equity and Environment Agenda