



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31757, Version: 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION relating to the Office of Sustainability and Environment; affirming The City of Seattle’s commitment to meet or exceed goals established in the Paris Agreement.

WHEREAS, global, human-caused climate change poses a grave threat to all life on Earth; and

WHEREAS, according to the World Health Organization, human-caused climate change is already killing some 150,000 people every year around the world; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council (“Council”) passed Resolution 31312 in 2011, establishing the goal of zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and an interim target of a 58 percent reduction from 2008 levels by 2030; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle’s (“City’s”) 2013 Seattle Climate Action Plan identifies specific strategies and actions designed to meet the City’s climate goals; and

WHEREAS, climate change threatens Seattle residents’ health, well-being, and economic vitality, and climate impacts; and

WHEREAS, people of color, immigrants, refugees, economically disadvantaged residents, older people and children, people who are homeless, and people with existing mental or health conditions will experience climate change disproportionately; and

WHEREAS, climate action strengthens our community and economy by creating clean energy jobs, reducing utility bills, and creating a laboratory for innovation while also advancing broader community goals; and

WHEREAS, carbon pricing can be an effective tool to reduce carbon pollution and raise funds to invest in

building a clean energy economy; and

WHEREAS, the City has enacted bold policies and programs to reduce emissions from its transportation, building energy, and waste sectors and reduced emissions while its population has grown; and

WHEREAS, Council passed Resolution 31712 in 2016, endorsing community principles for green jobs and requesting that the City incorporate strategies to advance green careers for people of color and other marginalized or under-represented groups, as well as supporting sustainable entrepreneurship and economic cooperative models; and

WHEREAS, the City has signed on to the global Compact of Mayors, the Mayors National Climate Action Agenda, and the global Under2 Memorandum of Understanding and works with cities across the world to advance innovative and just climate action through the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance and C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group; and

WHEREAS, the City created the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2005, signed by more than 1,000 mayors from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico who committed to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 EPA report, *Climate Change in the United States: Benefits of Global Action*, states that global action on climate change would prevent nearly 70,000 premature American deaths annually by the end of the century while sparing the country hundreds of billions of dollars in economic losses; and

WHEREAS, the Paris Agreement has been signed by 195 nations, including the United States, with the goal to limit global warming to below 2° C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit global temperature increase to 1.5° C, and adopting nationally determined targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, the United States, as a signatory to the 2016 Paris Agreement, committed to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025; and

WHEREAS, a peer-reviewed study in the journal Nature, titled *Paris Agreement climate proposals need a*

boost to keep warming well below 2° C, concluded that even the reductions targets agreed to in the Paris Agreement are not sufficient to keep global warming to below 1.5 degrees, and that instead they would result in warming between 2.6 and 3.1 degrees; and

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2017, President Donald Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, joining Nicaragua and Syria as the only countries not participating

WHEREAS, on that same day, Seattle Mayor Edward B. Murray, along with 59 other U.S. mayors representing 35 million Americans, committed to the goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Trump Administration has abandoned America's pledge to contribute \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund, the aim of which is to help developing countries reduce emissions that cause climate change and adapt to the unavoidable changes set in motion by greenhouse gas emissions, of which America is the largest historical contributor; and

WHEREAS, contributing to the Green Climate Fund, as other developed and developing countries are already doing, is central to America's fair contribution to international climate efforts; and

WHEREAS, the direction of investment capital plays a salient role in combating the climate crisis, the City and Mayor Murray have expressed their support for fossil fuel divestment, and the Seattle City Employees' Retirement System (SCERS) Board of Administration is currently considering fossil fuel divestment and reinvestment strategies in renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, there are a number of proposed new fossil fuel infrastructure projects in Washington State and elsewhere that directly impact Washington residents that directly impact Washington residents, including the nation's largest oil-by-rail terminal in Vancouver, WA, the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery in Kalama, WA, and the Kinder Morgan Pipeline Expansion in British Columbia; and

WHEREAS, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) continues to own and operate the Colstrip power plant, a coal-fired power plant in Montana and the third largest carbon polluter in the United States that in 2015 released greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to the annual emissions of approximately 3.5 million passenger

cars; and

WHEREAS, two of the four boilers at Colstrip are on a path to retirement, but it appears that PSE has no intention of retiring the two remaining boilers until at least 2035; and

WHEREAS, the City of Portland, OR, has passed an ordinance prohibiting the construction of all new fossil fuel projects in the City, and when passing the ordinance, Portland Mayor Hales stated: “[W]e can build part of a green wall on the West Coast by saying we aren’t going to have these facilities in our city...it [prohibiting construction of new fossil fuel projects in West Coast cities] starts to have a profound effect that’s far more than local”; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and the export of fossil fuels significantly undermines the goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement, and therefore represents a grave threat to life on Earth;

NOW, THEREFORE,

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

Section 1. The City of Seattle commits to doing its part to meet the United States’ obligation under the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and reaffirms its commitment to becoming carbon-neutral by 2050 and reducing greenhouse gas emissions 58 percent below 2008 levels by 2030.

Section 2. The Seattle City Council (“Council”) requests that the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), by December 30, 2017, identify the key climate actions necessary to meet or exceed the goals ratified by the Paris Agreement such that Seattle is doing its part to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, while advancing Seattle’s goals for a just and sustainable future.

Section 3. The City of Seattle commits to work with concerned communities, companies, local and state governments, and coalitions to ensure Seattle is participating and leading, where appropriate, the response to fulfill all United States commitments in the Paris Agreement, such as supporting the Green Climate Fund. The Seattle City Council requests that OSE report back to the Chair of the Sustainability and Transportation

Committee about these efforts by September 30, 2017.

Section 4. The City of Seattle supports the implementation of an equitable and effective price on carbon pollution and reinvestment of those funds to help make alternatives to fossil fuel more accessible and affordable.

Section 5. As part of advancing Seattle's goals for a just and sustainable future, The City of Seattle will continue to create more equitable access to green career pathways, as outlined in Resolution 31712, challenging the false dichotomy between supporting good jobs and protecting the planet.

Section 6. The City of Seattle urges the Seattle City Employees' Retirement System (SCERS) staff and Board of Administration to re-evaluate its position about the role fossil fuels play in Seattle employees' retirement funds and how they impact the health of Seattle retirees' investments, and continue reviewing fossil fuel divestment strategies. The City of Seattle also encourages increasing investments in renewable and sustainable energy sources.

Section 7. Council requests that the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) and OSE analyze and assess which modifications to the City's development regulations are required to prohibit, to the extent permitted by law, new fossil fuel infrastructure projects in the City of Seattle. Council requests that OPCD and OSE transmit a written report of the assessment to the Chair of the Sustainability and Transportation Committee by December 30, 2017.

Section 8. The City of Seattle calls on Puget Sound Energy to retire the Colstrip coal plant in Rosebud County, Montana by 2025 and to replace Colstrip with 100 percent renewable energy, energy efficiency, demand response, and storage. The Council further urges Puget Sound Energy to do its part to make Washington coal-free.

Section 9. The City of Seattle calls on all state entities to exercise their authority to halt and reject all new fossil fuel infrastructure projects within Washington State, such as the Manufacturing and Marine Export Facility in Kalama, Washington, the Tesoro Savage Vancouver Energy Distribution Terminal in Vancouver,

Washington, the Kinder Morgan Pipeline Expansion project in British Columbia, Canada, and expansion of the five Puget Sound fossil fuel refineries. The Council issues this call because the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure undercuts each person's fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment, shirks our collective responsibility to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment, and impedes this generation's role as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations, all in direct opposition to the policies declared in the State Environmental Policy Act, chapter 43.21C RCW.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2017, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2017.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2017.

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2017.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)