

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

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

A RESOLUTION in support of reducing greenhouse gas pollution, requesting the Environmental Protection Agency to use the Clean Air Act to enforce tighter controls on greenhouse gas emissions.

WHEREAS, the decade from 2000 to 2010 was the warmest on record, and 2005 and 2010 tied for the hottest years on record; and

WHEREAS, the current level of CO2 in the atmosphere is approximately 392 parts per million (ppm); and

WHEREAS, one of the world’s leading climate scientists, Dr. James Hansen, stated in 2008: “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 to at most 350ppm”; and

WHEREAS, as early as the 1850s, scientists began predicting that greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels would eventually lead to the warming of the Earth’s surface; and

WHEREAS, the current international pledges to address the climate crisis are so weak that they could result in 770 ppm CO2 by 2100, a concentration of CO2 incompatible with human life as we know it; and

WHEREAS, 97 percent of scientific experts are convinced that human activity is responsible for climate change and there is a growing consensus among researchers that reducing atmospheric concentrations of CO2 to 350 ppm or below as soon as possible is needed to avoid risking catastrophic and irreversible climate change; and

WHEREAS, according to the Global Humanitarian Forum climate change is already responsible every year for some 300,000 deaths, 325 million people seriously affected, and economic losses worldwide of \$125 billion; and

WHEREAS, extreme weather events are striking with increased frequency, with deleterious consequences for people and wildlife; in the United States alone:

- 2005 had the most hurricanes on record since 1851;
- blizzards plagued the Northeast during the winter of 2011;
- intense rainfall and snowmelt forced the Mississippi River to overflow its banks across the Midwest and South in summer 2011;
- the unprecedented 2011 Texas drought lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture to declare the entire state a natural disaster zone;
- heat waves scorched the Midwest and East in summer 2011, with many cities hitting record-high temperatures and for example, Oklahoma on pace to break its record for days over 100 degrees; and

1 WHEREAS, climate change is threatening food security as crop growth and yields diminish and  
2 droughts, floods and changes in snowpack depth are disrupting water supplies; and

3 WHEREAS, scientists have concluded that by 2100 as many as one in 10 species may be on the  
4 verge of extinction due to climate change with many animals and plants already losing their  
5 habitats and food sources, struggling to move poleward and upward to keep pace with our  
6 changing climate, shifting their timing of breeding and migration patterns, and disappearing  
7 as populations die out; and

8 WHEREAS, the oceans have become 30 percent more acidic since the industrial revolution due to  
9 their uptake of carbon dioxide, which is harming ocean life from shellfish to corals as they  
10 struggle to build the shells and skeletons they need to survive; and

11 WHEREAS, the world's ice is rapidly melting, threatening water supplies, raising sea levels, and  
12 jeopardizing ice-dependent animals, like the polar bear and walrus, so severely that Arctic  
13 summer sea ice is half the area and thickness it was several decades ago, alpine glaciers are  
14 in near-global retreat, and the giant Greenland and west Antarctic ice sheets are melting at  
15 an accelerating pace; and

16 WHEREAS, according to Scientific American, sea level is rising faster along the U.S. East Coast  
17 than it has for at least 2,000 years, and is accelerating in pace, threatening coastal wildlife  
18 and the 40 percent of the world's population that lives within 60 miles of the coast; and

19 WHEREAS, for four decades, the Clean Air Act has protected the air we breathe through a proven,  
20 comprehensive, successful system of pollution control that saves lives and creates economic  
21 benefits exceeding its costs by many times; and

22 WHEREAS, with the Clean Air Act, air quality in this country has improved significantly since  
23 1970, despite major growth both in our economy and industrial production; and

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

WHEREAS, the Clean Air Act has produced economic benefits valued at \$2 trillion or 30 times the  
cost of regulation; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, the Clean Air Act can work immediately to curb greenhouse gas pollution without new  
climate legislation or in conjunction with new climate legislation; and

1 WHEREAS, The City prides itself on being a leader in the fight against climate change and for  
clean air, including:

- 2 • In 2005, the City showed national leadership by launching the Mayor's Climate  
Protection Agreement through the U.S. Council of Mayors, with over 1,000 cities  
3 signing to date that they would strive to meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets of  
the Kyoto Agreement;
- 4 • In 2005, the City's municipally-owned electric utility became the nation's first  
carbon neutral utility;
- 5 • In 2006, the City adopted its first Climate Action Plan with a goal of reducing  
emissions to 7% below 1990 levels by 2012, and that the City had reached that  
6 reduction target by 2008;
- 7 • In 2010, the City Council adopted a goal to become a carbon neutral city by 2050.

8 NOW THEREFORE,

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

11 Section 1. Climate change is not an abstract problem for the future or one that will only  
12 affect far-distant places but rather climate change is happening now, we are causing it, and the  
13 longer we wait to act, the more we lose and the more difficult the problem will be to solve; and we,  
14 the Seattle City Council, on behalf of the residents of Seattle, do hereby urge the Environmental  
15 Protection Agency to move swiftly to fully employ and enforce the Clean Air Act to do our part to  
16 reduce carbon in our atmosphere to no more than 350 parts per million.  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

Adopted by the City Council the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2011, and signed by me  
in open session in authentication of its adoption this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.

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

THE MAYOR CONCURRING:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael McGinn, Mayor

Filed by me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

(Seal)

**FISCAL NOTE FOR NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS**

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Contact Person/Phone:</b>	<b>CBO Analyst/Phone:</b>
Legislative Department	Ben Noble/684-8160	

**Legislation Title:** A RESOLUTION in support of reducing greenhouse gas pollution, requesting the Environmental Protection Agency to use the Clean Air Act to enforce tighter controls on greenhouse gas emissions.

**Summary of the Legislation:**

This legislation requests that EPA use the Clean Air Act as a regulatory mechanism to control greenhouse gas emissions.

**Background:**

The City has taken a number of steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at a local level, but also recognizes that comparable measures need to be taken at both the state, national and international level.

Please check one of the following:

**This legislation does not have any financial implications.**

(Please skip to "Other Implications" section at the end of the document and answer questions a-h. Earlier sections that are left blank should be deleted. Please delete the instructions provided in parentheses at the end of each question.)

**This legislation has financial implications.**

(If the legislation has direct fiscal impacts (e.g., appropriations, revenue, positions), fill out the relevant sections below. If the financial implications are indirect or longer-term, describe them in narrative in the "Other Implications" Section. Please delete the instructions provided in parentheses at the end of each title and question.)

