



Legislation Text

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The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Cohen

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning **Request for City Action - Supporting the Paris Accord**

For the purpose of recognizing the importance of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement; opposing the ill-advised decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement; and committing to practices that disrupt short-sighted trends in consumption of natural resources and degradation of human health to create a liveable, economical, equitable, and just energy future for all Baltimoreans regardless of age, race, income, or zip code.

Recitals

Whereas, Baltimore recognizes the importance of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement (Paris Accord) under the United Nations Framework on Climate Change, which amplified the resolve of a generation to limit global mean temperature increases to 1.5C for the preservation of future generations.

Whereas, Under the Paris Accord, the United States pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025. Maryland has always been bolder than the average with a greenhouse gas target of 40% below 2006 levels by 2030, and climbing.

Whereas, the recent decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Accord is alarming and requires great cities and states to step up and act to ensure that the long-term goals of the Paris accord can still be realized.

Whereas, The City of Baltimore is committed to taking aggressive action to mitigate global climate change, as indicated by the agenda set in our *Climate Action Plan*, and efforts including the *Tree Baltimore Initiative*, *The Green Network Plan*, and an increasing focus on areas of clean energy, waste diversion, land use, zoning, and transportation. We have shown the desire to foster growth of a green and sustainable city as defined by affordability, and equity in access to a healthy food supply, clean water, and toxic-free housing. In doing so, the City is aligned with *Prosperous, Renewable Maryland* an ambitious program for a just and 100% renewable electricity sector. Baltimore joins with cities and counties around the world, including many in the United States, who have committed to a 100% renewable future.

Whereas, Baltimore's Mayor has signed on to the Climate Action Agenda.

Whereas, Baltimore is not yet in full recovery from its history of maritime industry, it is charged with remediation of many decades of pollution to its neighborhoods and people and revival of the loss of the local economy after trade and manufacturing declined.

Whereas, Climate Change is the greatest environmental health threat of our time. It causes temperature spikes and rising sea levels that result in preventable and premature death of our citizenry who endure increasingly extended allergy seasons, surges in heat stress, heart disease, asthma and other lung disease, as well as the spread of vector borne illnesses like Lyme disease and the Zika virus.

Whereas, the effects of environmental health threats are not limited to physical degradation but include psycho-social stressors which wear away the resilience of humans to recover from pollution impacts of air and water contamination from fossil fuel energy generation.

Whereas, household energy is unaffordable for tens of thousands of Baltimoreans resulting in impossible choices of paying for food, medicines, rent, or energy bills.

Whereas, the impacts of energy choice in favor of fossil fuels disproportionately stacks burdens on people of color and those with limited English proficiency and low-income communities whether they are in the cities, suburbs, or exurbs.

Whereas, climate change impacts are felt first and worst by vulnerable populations which exacerbates inequity, we reject treating people and the planet as resources to be exploited.

Whereas, Baltimore is particularly sensitive to all of the above because of its reliance on the business of dirty energy. In 2015, a single Baltimore trash incinerator emitted 764,895 tons of carbon dioxide, the largest single source of carbon dioxide emissions in the city by far.

Whereas, Baltimore area air quality is preventably poor with levels of ground-level ozone - or smog - that threatens human health from sources including truck traffic, commercial congestion, the colocation of coal burning plants within fifteen miles of the city, and industrial conditions in neighboring cities and states.

Whereas, a lack of healthful food options across a one mile span for every five hundred community residents in Baltimore City, and/or one third of Baltimore area community members constitutes a food desert.

Whereas, the existence of food deserts in Baltimore is a loss of freedom to choose foodstuffs that are healthful, local, or low-emission which increases environmental health injustice in Baltimore.

Whereas, urban agriculture increases resilience by enhancing the availability of healthful food and offers the benefit of carbon storage in the soil.

Whereas, toxic chemicals from industry are pervasive in the built environment to the detriment of human health and natural resources, toxics have permeated the articles of everyday life including cleaning products, fragrance, feminine, beauty and personal care, and the retail markets and shops selling related goods and services that are inequitably concentrated in urban centers.

Whereas, freight trains carrying volatile Bakken crude oil threaten 165,000 people who live in the “blast zone” in Baltimore City and facilitate the extraction and combustion of some of the most climate-polluting oil on the planet.

Whereas, Baltimore is under threat of increased flooding and extreme tides due to sea level rise, which contributes to toxic mold conditions that affect indoor air quality.

Whereas, Baltimore City sewage and stormwater pipes are aged and in disrepair, flooding sewers to overflowing until waste, toxins, and pollutants make their way into residential homes with increased frequency as sea level rises and extreme weather events occur.

Whereas, the 14-mile Red Line Train connecting Western Baltimore County to Bayview was cancelled by executive authority without heed of existing inequities, transportation needs or the opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and realize the health benefits of mass transit.

Whereas, Baltimore has significant potential for collective action because it has long standing neighborhood and community networks.

Whereas, Baltimore's Port has the potential to be an economic engine and coastal hub for renewable energy industries.

Whereas, local job opportunities in the clean energy sector are tied to increases in in-state targets for clean energy generation, as an anchor for Baltimore business development with solar and wind being the fastest growing economies in the country.

Whereas, large cities like Baltimore have the political clout to lead ambitious initiatives in the absence of state and federal action.

Whereas, in order to assume a leadership role in national and international efforts to mitigate and roll back damage to our environment in the wake of the decision to leave the Paris Accord, Baltimore supports the implementation of the following policies and actions:

- Baltimore City will strive for a 100% clean, renewable electricity supply by the year 2050.
- Baltimore City will strive to develop local and Citywide procurement policies that prioritize non-toxic cleaning products and byproducts in municipal buildings and related contracts to stem the tide of waterway pollution.
- Baltimore City will limit the development and expansion of facilities that handle crude oil while working with port authorities and railway companies to increase transparency and accountability for shipments, by rail, with special attention to the environmental health implications of these actions for residents.
- Baltimore City will aggressively pursue municipal renewable energy consumption that supports in state generation of Offshore Wind in Maryland to encourage wind technology manufacturing at the Port of Baltimore.
- Baltimore will develop aggressive policies and regulations that increase residential conservation and energy efficiency measures regardless of the status of residents as renters, owners, or operators.
- Baltimore City will strive to disincentivize energy generation from incineration technologies, a source of greenhouse gases, and mitigate health harms associated with pollution from combustion.
- Baltimore City will develop a solid waste management plan that will curtail the use of waste incineration, with the explicit aims of eliminating waste incineration and protecting the workers involved.
- Baltimore City will work to develop and implement a comprehensive municipal food scrap and yard waste door-to-door composting collection policy.

- Baltimore will work with other local governments, non-governmental organizations, faith communities, and others to promote the adoption of an energy affordability plan by the State of Maryland.
- Baltimore City will promote overall health by encouraging diets that reduce carbon emissions, and will support local, urban agriculture programs and markets.
- Baltimore City will invest in comprehensive mass transportation that provides viable, affordable, and accessible services for all.
- Baltimore City will promote equitable distribution of alternative transportation, including bicycles, across neighborhoods.
- Baltimore City will advocate for fossil fuel free municipal and commercial fleets.
- Baltimore City will advocate for the targeted use of electric buses on routes where the greatest air pollution levels exist within the City with the aim of reducing emissions where vulnerable populations exist.
- Baltimore City will strive to incentivize efficient electric residential and commercial heating systems, including in rental properties, to reduce the direct use of fossil fuels in buildings, with emphasis on reduction of combustion sources.
- Baltimore City will promote energy efficiency and conservation and related technologies including, solar hot water, air or ground-source heat pumps, and will encourage industrial non-combustion alternatives where possible.
- Baltimore City will prioritize funding of sustainable land use decisions including community land trusts, increased tree canopy programs and community greenspace.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, that the Council recognizes the importance of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement; opposes the ill-advised decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement; and commits to practices that disrupt short-sighted trends in consumption of natural resources and degradation of human health to create a liveable, economical, equitable, and just energy future for all Baltimoreans regardless of age, race, income, or zip code.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Governor, the Chair of the Maryland Public Service Commission, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House Speaker, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.