



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY\*

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL R  
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke and Scott

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning  
**Request for Federal Action - Enforce the Clean Air Act to Combat Climate Change**

FOR the purpose of reaffirming that climate change is not an abstract problem for the future, or one that will only affect far-distant places, but rather climate change is happening now, we are causing it, and the longer we wait to act, the more we lose and the more difficult the problem will be to solve; and urging the Acting Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Bob Perciasepe, and President Barack Obama, to move swiftly to fully employ and enforce the Clean Air Act to do our part to reduce carbon in our atmosphere to no more than 350 parts per million.

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

WHEREAS, the current level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is approximately 392 parts per million (ppm).

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 CO<sub>2</sub> will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm.

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency determined that current and future greenhouse gas concentrations endanger public health, and 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 U.S. \$125 billion.

WHEREAS, extreme weather events, most notably heat waves and precipitation extremes, are striking with increased frequency, with deadly consequences for people and wildlife; according to the NOAA, in the United States in 2011 alone, a record 14 weather and climate disasters occurred, including droughts, heat waves, and floods, that cost at least \$US 1 billion each in damages and loss of human lives.

WHEREAS, research shows that climate change is affecting food security by negatively impacting the growth and yields of important crops; and droughts, floods, and changes in snowpack are altering water supplies.

WHEREAS, scientists have concluded that by 2100 as many as one in 10 species may be on the verge of extinction due to climate change.

WHEREAS, the world's land-based ice is rapidly melting, threatening water supplies in many regions and raising sea levels, and Arctic summer sea ice extent has decreased to about half what it was several decades ago, with an accompanying drastic reduction in sea-ice thickness and volume, which is severely jeopardizing ice-dependent animals.

WHEREAS, sea level is rising faster along the U.S. East Coast than it has for at least 2,000 years, is accelerating in pace, and could rise by 3 to 6 feet in this century, threatening millions of Americans with severe flooding.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, according to a government analysis, the Clean Air Act has produced economic benefits valued at \$2 trillion - 30 times the cost of regulation.

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.

WHEREAS, The city of Baltimore prides itself on being a leader in the fight against climate change and for clean air, and is working hard to develop a local Climate Action Plan through the Office of Sustainability to build off of the commitment to sustainability embodied in Baltimore's Sustainability Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, that climate change is not an abstract problem for the future or one that will only affect far-distant places but rather climate change is happening now, we are causing it, and the longer we wait to act, the more we lose and the more difficult the problem will be to solve; and we, the Baltimore City Council, on behalf of the residents of Baltimore, do hereby urge the Acting Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Bob Perciasepe, and President Barack Obama, to move swiftly to fully employ and enforce the Clean Air Act to do our part to reduce carbon in our atmosphere to no more than 350 parts per million.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the President of the United States, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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ccres/CleanAirCity/CBD:tw

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