

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today as a teacher and a concerned citizen. I am privileged to be a source of information, mentorship and love for up to 300 students every year. My job allows me the honor of participating in the education of our future generations. Those generations will not only inherit our intellectual and emotional capacities, but also our physical and material ones. I believe it is our responsibility to set them up with the best possible opportunities to succeed, just like many of our own parents wished to do for us. However, I believe at this point in history, we are doing the exact opposite. As a society, we are destroying the environment and the future at an alarming rate, with seemingly no end in sight. The most worrying aspect of this destruction, though, is that we as a society do not seem to recognize the urgency nor the importance of reversing it, or at least diminishing it.

The Climate Protection Plan that was passed in 2008 is set to expire this year. While seemingly ambitious for a time when climate change was not considered an existential crisis to most people, the Climate Protection Plan itself was insufficient. The proposed resolution to replace it once it expires, Resolution 200005, appears to follow suit in its scant goals and objectives. That we are not significantly exceeding the goals set in 2008 is disappointing in itself, but over the now twelve years that have passed we have armed ourselves with a wealth of data and information about the climate and yet we still do not consider this issue with the boldness that it necessitates.

The carbon goals as stated in R. 200005 are significantly subpar and do not rise up to the occasion. We should strive to reduce carbon emissions by 100% of 2000 levels by 2030 at the very latest, not maybe by 2040. We should be leaders in this urgent cause, not holdouts in an unwinnable game of chicken. We can be bold in the operations of our city government AND push our citizens, organizations and companies within the city to make more responsible carbon decisions.

I understand that this issue may not be politically palatable to many as there may not be broad support for policies that seek to mitigate the damage of a far away into the future opponent. Many people, especially in this time of pandemic crisis are suffering, wondering how they will pay rent or put food on the table or keep a just payroll. It may appear to some of us that getting through this pandemic stands in contradiction to bold climate change action, that it just is not the most important issue at hand, that we can worry about it when this pandemic is over and that there will be a time to work on that if we are just patient. The truth is, we cannot be patient. We have a ticking time bomb. We need to act urgently and boldly now, not later, even just a little later. The effects of COVID-19 are devastating to so many, and it is imperative that we do our very best to protect the most vulnerable. At the same time, those same most vulnerable will be the most affected by climate change, if they have not been already. The policies that we put in place in regards to climate change need to be bold as well as just and restorative. We need to prioritize addressing the needs of those populations that have been historically disenfranchised, mistreated and ignored. We do this with significant investments in disenfranchised communities, and with restorative action for those that have faced the harshest of policies by past and current governments. The language of any resolution, legislation, or proposal should at minimum clearly present how this priority investment will be pursued and achieved. Simple lip-service will not do.

I will conclude this comment by summarizing my two highest priority requests for this Resolution 200005: First, The goals as stated are not nearly ambitious enough; target dates for carbon reductions need to be set for half the current timelines, to 2025 for a 50% reduction below 2005 levels, and to 2030 for 100% reduction to 2005 levels. Second, any and all proposals should include explicit and detailed

language about how disenfranchised communities will receive priority investments and restorative attention from city officials.

It is challenging to approach this issue with the urgency it requires, even for someone like myself who feels very passionate about this. A challenge is not something that should stop us as citizens and leaders to act in the best interest of our city and our people, let alone the whole world. I hope and expect that city council will put the adequate amount of attention to these words and those of the people who cannot boldly speak for themselves in this type of platform. As an educator, those are the voices of the children I teach every day and every year.

Sincerely,

Sebastian Barraza