

INTRODUCED: March 9, 2020

A RESOLUTION No. 2020-R024

To recognize the effects of global warming caused by human activity and to establish a climate action goal to achieve a 45 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 from the 2008 baseline.

Patron – Mayor Stoney

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: APR 13 2020 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 2012-R69-103, adopted July 9, 2012, the City adopted a sustainability plan for the City of Richmond entitled “RVAgreen: A Roadmap to Sustainability,” which builds on existing sustainability efforts and priorities of the City of Richmond divided into five focus areas: Economic Development, Energy, Environment, Open Space, and Land Use and Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that the City must remain committed to the sustainability goals articulated in the aforementioned plan as the City develops a new equity-centered, integrated climate action and resilience plan; and

AYES: 8 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: JUN 8 2020 REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, global temperatures have already risen by one degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels, and the effects of climate change are evident in, among other things, extreme weather conditions, rising air and water temperatures, changes in precipitation, and declining surface water quality; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a special report in October 2018 concerning global warming that concluded that if global temperatures rise above 1.5 degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels, worldwide risks for flooding of major coastal cities, the breakdown of agricultural systems, mass migration, and catastrophic weather events that pose significant threats to human society will increase; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the said special report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that carbon dioxide emissions must be reduced by 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050 in order to stabilize a 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature increase to prevent disastrous effects on global climate, ecosystems, and human societies; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the City of Richmond's greenhouse gas emissions account for four percent of the community's total emissions and residents and businesses account for 96 percent, thereby making community education and engagement on issues of climate change critical; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence indicates that global warming is caused by emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from human activities, primarily from the combustion of fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the environmental effects of climate change, the Council believes that the City must also address how climate change affects communities within the city of Richmond and worldwide as climate change relates to race, socio-economic status, and inequity for people of color, immigrants, indigenous communities, low-income individuals, and persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that homeless persons are disproportionately affected by climate change, and will continue to bear an excess burden from increasing temperatures, the rise of sea levels, the spread of disease, and the economic consequences of inaction on the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that, in order to benefit all communities within the city of Richmond, the City must maintain its commitment to climate action, climate resilience, and sustainability policies that address the specific experiences, vulnerabilities, and needs of the most defenseless communities within the city of Richmond by engaging such communities in climate mitigation and climate resilience planning; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that the costs of addressing the climate crisis are far less than the costs of not addressing the climate crisis and that solving the crisis will take significant public investment, education, commitment and resolve; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the City has taken steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the local impacts of climate change, including adopting the Paris Climate goals to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius on the municipal level and setting a target for municipal and community-wide greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 80 percent by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that, even with these commitments, the impacts of climate change globally and locally require greater action and leadership in order to reach global net-zero emissions by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that developed economies, which are well-equipped to rapidly transition to renewables, may need to increase their sustainability efforts as the climate crisis progresses; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the City would be joining other jurisdictions within the Commonwealth of Virginia that are leading by example, including Albemarle County, Alexandria, Arlington, and Charlottesville, in the commitment to carbon neutrality by or before 2050, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, which is committed to 100 percent of Virginia's electricity from carbon-free sources by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that each individual has an obligation to participate in sustainability efforts, mitigate the effects of climate change for future generations, take unprecedented action to lead and empower community-wide greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and prepare the city of Richmond for the effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that, in light of the foregoing, it is in the best interests of the citizens of the City of Richmond that the Council recognize the effects of global warming and establish a climate action goal for the City of Richmond to achieve a 45 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero gas emissions by 2050 from the 2008 baseline;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby recognizes that global warming caused by human activity increases emissions of greenhouse gases and has resulted in a climate crisis that threatens

communities within the city of Richmond, the Richmond region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, communities around the nation, and civilizations and ecosystems worldwide.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council hereby establishes a climate action goal for the City of Richmond to achieve a 45 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 from the 2008 baseline.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council calls on the United States Government, Congress, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and other local governments to recognize that global warming caused by human activity that increases emissions of greenhouse gases has resulted in a climate crisis; to initiate a just transition and mobilization effort to restore a safe climate and build a sustainable economy; and to convey the urgency of global warming awareness to the public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council hereby supports the commitment to a citywide just transition and mobilization effort to reverse global warming and is dedicated to utilizing any financial and regulatory assistance from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States Government, to the extent permitted by law, for the purpose of ending citywide greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible, initiating efforts to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere, and accelerating adaptation and resilience strategies in preparation for intensifying climate impacts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

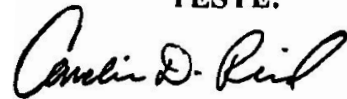
That the Council hereby supports the climate resilience goal for the City of Richmond to prepare for, adapt, and improve its resilience to the local impacts of climate change.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council hereby supports the development and implementation of an equity-centered, integrated climate action and resilience plan to advance the climate action and resilience goals; the education of residents and businesses on matters related to the climate crisis; and full community participation, inclusion, and recognition of the residents and businesses within the city of Richmond, along with community organizations dedicated to faith, youth, labor, academic institutions, civic participation, and marginalized populations, and other such community allies, who will be integral to the climate action plan development and implementation and mobilization effort.

A TRUE COPY:

TESTE:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carlin D. Reil". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light gray rectangular background.

City Clerk



CITY OF RICHMOND

INTRACITY CORRESPONDENCE

O & R REQUEST

2020-020
FEB 13 2020

Office of the
Chief Administrative Officer

O&R REQUEST

DATE: February 12, 2020

EDITION: 1

TO: The Honorable Members of City Council

THROUGH: The Honorable Levar M. Stoney, Mayor

THROUGH: Lenora G. Reid, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

THROUGH: Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

THROUGH: Reginald Gordon, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

THROUGH: Robert C. Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Alicia Zatcoff, Sustainability Manager ARZ

RE: Net Zero Emissions Resolution

ORD. OR RES. No. _____

PURPOSE: To recognize that global warming caused by human activity that increases emissions of greenhouse gases has resulted in an urgent climate situation and to adopt climate action and resilience goals for the City of Richmond and community.

REASON: The adoption of climate action and resilience goals, including a net zero greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal, is necessary for the City of Richmond to combat the urgent climate challenge that faces our community and will create broad social, environmental, and economic benefits for the community.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached resolution that recognizes a climate crisis and adopts climate mitigation and resilience goals for the City of Richmond and community.

BACKGROUND:

Scientific evidence is conclusive that global warming is caused by emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from human activities (i.e. burning fossil fuels), and that global warming causes climate change. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the leading body for assessing the science regarding climate change, released a special report in October 2018 on Global Warming of 1.5° C that concluded that if global temperatures rise above 1.5° C relative to pre-industrial levels we face elevated risks

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FEB 27 2020

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

worldwide associated with potential flooding of major coastal cities, the breakdown of agricultural systems, mass migration, and catastrophic extreme weather events that pose significant threats to human society. There is a consensus among scientists, as described in the United Nations' IPCC report, that we must reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by no later than 2030 and reach net zero around 2050, in order to stabilize a 1.5° C temperature increase to have a chance at avoiding profound and disastrous impacts on global climate, ecosystems, and human societies.

Localities around the world and their residents are bearing the brunt of climate change impacts and will continue to do so at an increasing level into the future. In Richmond, that means a greater frequency and intensity of heat events, record-breaking rainfall, more extreme weather events, and other disruptions that threaten our residents' health, economic security, and quality of life as well as compromise community infrastructure, built assets, and natural resources.

In our community, it is not possible to address climate change without also confronting racial, socio-economic and other inequity, and vice versa. In Richmond, frontline communities including people of color, low-income individuals, immigrants, indigenous communities, people with disabilities and the unhoused are already disproportionately impacted by climate change, and will continue to bear an excess burden as climate impacts increase in the future.

However, the City of Richmond, can join other local governments leading with forward-thinking climate action that is needed now more than ever. The proposed resolution acknowledges the current climate science. It calls for revising the city's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals to a 45% reduction in community and city government greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and net zero emissions by 2050 using a baseline year of 2008; and it calls for Richmond to prepare for, adapt and improve city government and community resilience to local climate hazards.

Accompanying these proposed goals is a pathway to advancing and achieving them through RVA Green 2050, the City's equity-centered, integrated climate action and resilience planning and implementation process. RVAgreen 2050 is a community-based process that will benefit the entire community by addressing the specific experiences, vulnerabilities, and needs of frontline communities within Richmond to include, support and empower those communities to participate in the planning and implementation of climate action and climate resilience policy and initiatives.

In 2019, Integral Group, LLC donated goods and services to complete energy and greenhouse gas emissions modeling to show potential pathways and scenarios for achieving the 80% by 2050 greenhouse gas emission reduction goal. This work was made possible by support from the Energy Foundation via Council's adoption of Ord. No. 2018-045. In 2020, Greenlink Analytics, Inc., is donating goods and services to build upon the energy and greenhouse gas emission modeling conducted by Integral Group and updating it to show potential pathways and scenarios for achieving the goals of a 45% reduction in community and city government greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and net zero emissions by 2050. This work was made possible by support from the Energy Foundation via Council's adoption of Ord. No. 2019-334.

The proposed Net Zero Carbon Resolution is aligned with City Council Focus Areas as well as Mayor Stoney's strategic priorities and it will create broad social, environmental, and economic benefits such as reducing air pollution and associated public health risks, improving water quality, saving residents and businesses money, providing clean, renewable energy and local employment opportunities, increasing transportation options available to residents, and addressing environmental justice challenges in our community.

FISCAL IMPACT / COST: None

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: None

BUDGET AMENDMENT NECESSARY: No

REVENUE TO CITY: None

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: March 9, 2020

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: March 23, 2020

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Governmental Operations Committee

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES: City Attorney's Office

AFFECTED AGENCIES: Office of Sustainability, Departments of Public Works, Public Utilities, Department of Planning & Development Review, Economic Development, Housing & Community Development, Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities, Social Services, Justice Services, Budget & Strategic Planning

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: None

REQUIRED CHANGES TO WORK PROGRAM(S): None

ATTACHMENTS:

Net Zero Emissions Resolution
Green City Commission Support Letter

STAFF:

Alicia Zatcoff, Sustainability Manager, 646-3055



December 9, 2019

Dear Mayor Stoney and Richmond City Council Members,

The Richmond Green City Commission along with the undersigned businesses and organizations urge the adoption of the attached Resolution. The Resolution calls for:

- 1) a 45% greenhouse gas pollution reduction target by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050, and
- 2) Richmond to prepare for the local impacts of climate change, which include extreme heat, extreme rainfall and increased flooding.

As recognized when Richmond set the City's current goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050 under Mayor Stoney's leadership, climate change is already impacting the lives of families in our community. These impacts range from increasing the cost of food and housing to decreasing the quality of the air we breathe. Our low-income residents and people of color are on the frontlines of climate change where these impacts are likely to hit the hardest; families who struggle to afford to cool their homes will be even further strained as longer and hotter heat waves occur more often. And many of these frontline community members will also experience the worst effects of flooding from increasingly severe rainstorms. The importance of local government action has never been more urgent, and we applaud the Mayor and Council for your leadership to date on this critical issue.

Unfortunately, new evidence shows that Richmond's current goal is inadequate. Scientists across the globe are stating that the next 10 years will determine whether or not we are successful in avoiding the most catastrophic impacts of climate change and are calling for stronger steps to cut emissions, including substantial reductions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. By adopting these science-based emissions targets, Richmond will join leading localities in Virginia like Alexandria, Arlington and Charlottesville and align itself with Governor Ralph Northam's Executive Order 43, which calls for the Commonwealth to achieve 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050. The City should also fully support the RVAgreen 2050 equity-centered climate action process to create and implement a roadmap for achieving these goals.

This letter is signed by a cross-sector of community supporters who want their Mayor and City Council to lead on climate action, and it illustrates that businesses, organizations, and residents are ready to take action to help reach these ambitious—yet necessary and achievable—goals. The Richmond Green City Commission and all of those signing this letter stand ready to support you in this process and appreciate your consideration of this request to adopt this critically important Resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Francis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Emily Francis, Chair, Richmond Green City Commission

Community stakeholders who add their support to this letter:



VIRGINIA LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS



Citizens' Climate Lobby



SOUTHERN
ENVIRONMENTAL
LAW CENTER



VIRGINIA
CONSERVATION
NETWORK



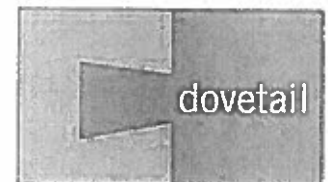
(Richmond Region Energy Alliance)



Rapid Transit



viridiant



ALLIANCE
for the Chesapeake Bay

Virginia Chapter of

MOTHERS OUT FRONT
MOBILIZING FOR A LIVABLE CLIMATE

