

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOBS
HOUSING

MOTION

As the gravity and urgency of the climate emergency become more apparent with each passing year of rising temperatures, dangerous wildfires, and more severe droughts—all of which disproportionately impact communities of color and the most vulnerable Angelenos—the City of Los Angeles must do all in its power to reduce its carbon emissions and move toward a sustainable, zero-carbon economy.

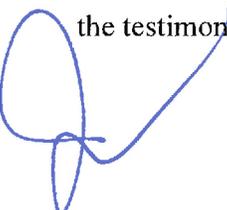
In recent years, the City has made progress towards decarbonizing its electric grid, phasing out urban oil drilling, and investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, but we have lagged behind other California cities in tackling our largest source of climate pollution citywide: buildings. Buildings in Los Angeles account for 43% of greenhouse gas emissions—more than any other sector in the city, and more than they comprise at nationwide (30%) or statewide (25%) levels.

Over fifty cities and counties in California have already taken action to reduce carbon emissions in new building construction and prepare their buildings for a carbon-neutral future. It is time for Los Angeles to do the same.

As a critical first step, the City must ensure new buildings being constructed today, rather than relying on fossil fuels as an energy source, are built to leverage our increasingly clean electric grid, which will be carbon-free by 2035, if not sooner. Zero-carbon buildings have better indoor air quality, lower construction costs, fewer safety risks—especially during earthquakes—and lower climate emissions than equivalent mixed-fuel buildings. Transitioning new construction away from fossil fuels will secure public health benefits and economic savings for decades to come, as well as ensure the City meets its Green New Deal zero-carbon buildings goals.

As the City embarks upon the transition to zero-carbon buildings, we must also be mindful that building regulations affect the lived experiences of Angelenos beyond the light switch and the thermostat. We must deliver the benefits of decarbonization in an equitable manner and be sure that decarbonization policies do not raise rents or utility costs for the many tenants in Los Angeles that are already rent-burdened. We must also ensure that the process of decarbonization does not slow down housing production during the worst housing and homelessness crisis our city has ever faced. Finally, we must also acknowledge that shifting to zero-carbon buildings may have potential impacts to jobs in construction, and we must work to mitigate and offset those potential impacts through creative strategies that create new, quality jobs for workers working in industries impacted by the transition of buildings.

To invite community engagement and solutions on these intersecting issues, the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office (CEMO) is addressing building decarbonization in its upcoming Climate Equity LA Series, which will include workshops and community focus groups. Building off of the findings of the Climate Equity LA Series, the City must develop a holistic approach to carbon neutrality and sustainability in our built environment, which centers equity, energy justice, housing justice, and environmental justice. Any new construction decarbonization ordinance, moreover, should be shaped by the testimony and insights that emerge from the series.



Fortunately, though significant, the challenges we face in transitioning to a zero-carbon economy are not insurmountable. We can find solutions, and we must begin to do so—because we have no time to waste.

The question is not if we will require decarbonized construction for new buildings—but when. We must begin this work now so that the city we are building today is laying the groundwork for the cleaner, healthier, and more equitable and sustainable Los Angeles of tomorrow.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Department of Building and Safety (DBS), with assistance from the City Attorney, the CEMO, and all relevant departments, to report back within 180 days with a plan for the implementation of an ordinance and/or regulatory framework, effective on or before January 1, 2023, that will require all new residential and commercial buildings in Los Angeles to be built so that they will achieve zero-carbon emissions. The plan should integrate and be informed by the findings of the CEMO's Climate Equity LA Series on building decarbonization, as well as by DBS's engagement with technical experts and key stakeholders per C.F. 21-1463 and additional engagement with building owner/operators, and should include:

- A recommended timeline for the implementation of the ordinance and/or regulatory framework, by building type;
- Recommended regulatory language to ensure that the ordinance and/or regulatory framework does not place the economic burden of transitioning to decarbonized construction on low-income tenants or contribute to housing destabilization or community displacement pressures;
- An analysis of any negative impacts to construction costs and timelines for publicly-funded residential buildings and recommendations for mitigating measures; and
- Strategies to mitigate and offset any potential impacts to construction jobs through programs and/or policies, developed in consultation with workers and labor union representatives for workers in the building trades impacted by the decarbonization of buildings, that would lead to the creation of new, quality jobs for workers working in impacted industries and that could bolster the City's ongoing Targeted Local Hire and Bridge to Jobs programs.

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