Legislation Text

File #: 200666, **Version:** 0

Declaring the intent to prioritize climate action and environmental justice in the ongoing COVID-19 recovery effort.

WHEREAS, The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic still requires urgent, coordinated, and forward-looking action by all levels of government, the private sector, community organizations, and residents; and

WHEREAS, As of June 2020, nearly 200,000 Philadelphians had filed for unemployment compensation, with nearly 70% of claimants reporting an educational attainment level below a high school diploma or GED, and a 30+ percentage point gap between Black and white claimants; and

WHEREAS, As of November 16, 2020, Philadelphia's Public Health Department reported 54,607 confirmed cases and 1,917 deaths from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that long-term exposure to air pollution is linked to higher mortality from COVID-19; an increase in one microgram per cubic meter of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) corresponds to an 8% increase in COVID-19 deaths; and

WHEREAS, Peer-reviewed studies have proven, on average, Black and Hispanic minorities bear a disproportionate burden compared to non-Hispanic whites from air pollution; and

WHEREAS, According to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the Covid-19 mortality rate is nearly twice as high for Black Philadelphians as for white Philadelphians; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is poorest large city in the country, with 23.3% of Philadelphians living below the Federal Poverty Line; and

WHEREAS, The Economy League of Greater Philadelphia found Black Philadelphians are 1.5 times more likely than white Philadelphians to make less than $40,000 per year and Latinx Philadelphians earn the least among all of Philadelphia's racial and ethnic groups; and

WHEREAS, The 2020 Pew State of Housing Affordability in Philadelphia report stated, half of all Hispanic households and 46% of African American households were cost-burdened; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's lowest income residents pay 23% of their incomes to utilities, among the highest of any group in the country, and energy insecurity affects over 50% of African-American households at all income levels, and 40% of all renters citywide; and

WHEREAS, Climate change continues to threaten the health and safety of the residents of the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has committed to the terms of the Paris Climate Accord, to limit the increase of global temperatures to 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels; and

WHEREAS, The impacts of climate change will disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities, especially through hotter day and extreme weather; and

WHEREAS, A 2019 study found clean energy jobs grew faster than the overall statewide labor market from 2017 to 2019 with 7% of all new jobs in the state attributed to clean energy employment growth from 2018 to 2019, and E2 ranked Pennsylvania 11th in the country for total clean energy jobs in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Solar installer was ranked as the fastest growing occupation in the United States, with a 51% increase between 2019 and 2020; and

WHEREAS, Growing demand for clean energy, energy efficiency, green space, and recycled materials creates jobs and businesses and a strong, local, circular economy; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia City Council has passed legislation and supported and funded plans and programs developed by Departments in collaboration with community organizations, businesses, neighborhood associations, and residents, including but not limited to Greenworks, the Municipal Energy Master Plan, the Beat the Heat Hunting Park: Community Heat Resiliency Plan, the Philadelphia 2035 Comprehensive Plan, The Philadelphia Energy Campaign, and Green City, Clean Waters, which all outline a shared vision for the future of Philadelphia. These plans and programs include goals and strategies for a cleaner, healthier, more prosperous, equitable and resilient, Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia City Council has prioritized reducing poverty through the Special Committee on Poverty Reduction and Prevention, the Poverty Action Plan, and the Poverty Action Fund; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia City Council has prioritized sustainable business practices and entrepreneurship by establishing tax credit programs for BCorps and local businesses that improve our environment and deliver family-sustaining jobs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL, Declares its intent to prioritize climate action and environmental justice in budget guidance and in the use of future Covid-19-related economic stimulus funds in order to achieve a just and green recovery that creates new, good green jobs, supports essential workers, trains and upskills workers, provides safe and resilient transit and affordable, healthy housing, ensures all communities have necessary resources within walkable and bikeable distances, invests in multi-modal infrastructure, and builds nature back into our environment to make Philadelphia an equitable, healthy, safe, sustainable City with a strong, local, circular economy.

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