



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR
January 22, 2019

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín
Councilmember Cheryl Davila
Councilmember Kate Harrison
Councilmember Rigel Robinson

Subject: Support a Green New Deal

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution supporting the development of a Green New Deal, a federal economic stimulus program to address climate change and transform the economy. Send a copy of the Resolution to U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Governor Gavin Newsom.

BACKGROUND

A report published in October 2018 by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that we have a twelve year window to avoid cataclysmic climate change by preventing global temperatures from increasing beyond 1.5°C of pre-industrial levels. The report emphasizes the scale and speed of transformation at all levels of the economy that will be required, including rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of CO² would need to decrease approximately 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' by 2050. This means that any remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing CO² from the atmosphere.¹

The City of Berkeley and its residents are deeply committed to sustainability and addressing climate change. Voters overwhelmingly approved Measure G in 2006, leading to the adoption of the Berkeley Climate Action Plan in 2009 - setting the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33% of 2000 levels by 2020, and 80% by 2050. Building on this plan, the award-winning Berkeley Resiliency Strategy was developed in 2016, in part to ensure that Berkeley is "resilient and prepared for the impacts of global warming". In June 2018, the Berkeley City Council unanimously declared a climate emergency, and this past November, nearly 85 percent of voters approved Measure R, to develop a long-term sustainable infrastructure plan known as Vision 2050.

¹<https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

Despite all the work already accomplished and in the pipeline, much of our infrastructure – streets, roads, sidewalks, storm drains, parks, the marina and waterfront – were constructed more than 70 years ago during the Works Projects Administration. Although the \$100 million-dollar Measure T1 infrastructure bond was approved by voters on November 8, 2016, and will be used to repair, renovate, replace or reconstruct aging infrastructure and facilities, our restoration needs far exceed what this bond can achieve. At the same time, we are faced with rapidly changing technologies and exponentially worsening predictions of climate change impacts.

Through Vision 2050 – a 30-year plan to identify and guide implementation of climate-smart, technologically-advanced, integrated and efficient infrastructure - Berkeley's infrastructure will be transformed, mirroring the scale of what was accomplished during the original New Deal. However, it will be much more challenging to accomplish this effort through local and regional funding strategies that compete against numerous municipal needs. Undoubtedly, a Green New Deal as outlined below would accelerate the work already underway in our city, moving us closer to a resilient and sustainable vision that our community supports. Replacing our infrastructure in this manner also provides a historic opportunity to create jobs, community wealth and address historically rooted racial and gender inequities.

A Green New Deal is a framework for an evolving set of policies and programs that aims to both tackle climate change and also transform the economy. A groundswell of momentum has emerged amongst newly elected Democratic leaders and activists. Led by Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the Sunrise Movement, by the end of November 2018, eighteen Democratic members of Congress, including Congresswoman Barbara Lee, have co-sponsored a proposed House Select Committee on a Green New Deal.

The Green New Deal is the only plan, or framework to develop one, that meets the scale and scope of transformation that science and justice demand. The primary environmental goals for a Green New Deal are²:

- 1) Dramatically expanding existing renewable power sources and deploy new production capacity with the goal of meeting 100% of national power demand through renewable sources;
- 2) Building a national, energy-efficient, “smart” grid;
- 3) Upgrading every residential and industrial building for state-of-the-art energy efficiency, comfort and safety;
- 4) Eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from the manufacturing, agricultural and other industries, including by investing in local-scale agriculture in communities across the country;

² <https://ocasio2018.com/green-new-deal>

- 5) Eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from, repairing and improving transportation and other infrastructure, and upgrading water infrastructure to ensure universal access to clean water;
- 6) Funding massive investment in the drawdown of greenhouse gases;
- 7) Making “green” technology, industry, expertise, products and services a major export of the United States, with the aim of becoming the undisputed international leader in helping other countries transition to greenhouse gas neutral economies, and bringing about a global Green New Deal.

The framework also recognizes that, “a national, industrial, economic mobilization of this scope and scale is a historic opportunity to virtually eliminate poverty in the United States and to make prosperity, wealth and economic security available to everyone participating in the transformation”³. To this end, it includes a job guarantee program, the diversification of local and regional economies, strong labor enforcement, a just transition for all, protection of tribal and indigenous lands, and the mitigation of racial and gender wealth gaps.

The objectives outlined for a Green New Deal not only reflect Berkeley’s ongoing efforts to mitigate climate change, but also our commitment to social, economic and racial justice. Examples of overlap include support for economic development programs and policies such as those supporting worker ownership, a public bank, initiatives supporting our homeless, and efforts to construct more affordable housing. Supporting a Green New Deal is in alignment with Berkeley’s continuous efforts to strive for equality, diversity, affordability, and our efforts to prevent climate catastrophe.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Supporting a plan for a Green New Deal will further the goals set forward in the Climate Action Plan and Resiliency Strategy by providing massive federal investment in our city, region and nation’s efforts responding to climate change impacts and actualizing a more resilient city.

CONTACT PERSON

Mayor Jesse Arreguín 510-981-7100

Attachments:

1. Resolution

³ Ibid

RESOLUTION NO. #####
EXPRESSING BERKELEY'S SUPPORT FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE FOR A
GREEN NEW DEAL

WHEREAS, human activities have warmed the Earth enough to end the 12,000-year period of climate stability that allowed agriculture and human civilization to develop; and

WHEREAS, the world came together in December 2015 to address the end to this period of climate stability due to global warming, agreeing to keep warming to "well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and to "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C"; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 the global surface temperature was over 1°C warmer than the pre-industrial base period; and

WHEREAS, global warming has already set in motion catastrophic changes to the Earth system, including accelerating ice mass loss from the Greenland and West Antarctic Ice Sheets and the thawing of the borders of the vast Arctic permafrost, which holds twice as much stored carbon as the entire atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, according to the latest climate projections, humanity is on track to warm the Earth a sustained average of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as soon as 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Greenland Ice Sheet, which is likely to completely collapse at 1.6°C warming, which NASA scientists have concluded would lead to 23 feet of sea-level rise, billions of climate refugees, and a "global-scale catastrophe"; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that sustained 1.5°C warming could cause a long-term, "continuous thaw" of the Arctic permafrost, which could turn the tundra from a carbon sink into source in the 2020s; and

WHEREAS, such tipping points must be avoided at all costs, as they will have positive feedback effects on the climate system, causing further and increasingly uncontrollable global warming; and

WHEREAS, over 19,000 scientists have signed a Second Warning to Humanity proclaiming that "a great change in our stewardship of the Earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided"; and

WHEREAS, climate-fueled droughts, famines, and diseases have already killed millions of people in the Global South, and displaced millions more; and

WHEREAS, indigenous and low-income communities and communities of color in the United States and abroad have suffered the gravest consequences of the extractive economy since its inception; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), in 2017, "the U.S. was impacted by 16 separate billion-dollar disaster events tying 2011 for the record number of billion-dollar disasters for an entire calendar year," with a cumulative cost of \$309.5 billion, shattering the previous U.S. annual record cost of \$219.2 billion in 2005 due to Hurricanes Dennis, Katrina, Rita and Wilma; and

WHEREAS, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that there is a twelve-year window for global warming to be kept to a maximum threshold of 1.5C increase above pre-industrial levels; and

WHEREAS, we cannot wait for more devastating floods, heatwaves, fires, droughts, rising sea levels, and public health and humanitarian crises that threaten local residents, ecologies, businesses, and the broader Bay Area population to begin the necessary emergency response; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley is deeply committed to sustainability and addressing climate change; and

WHEREAS, voters overwhelmingly approved Measure G in 2006, and the Berkeley Climate Action Plan was adopted in 2009 - setting the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33% of 2000 levels by 2020, and 80% by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the award-winning Berkeley Resilience Strategy was developed in 2016, building upon one of the Climate Action Plan goals to ensure Berkeley is "resilient and prepared for the impacts of global warming"; and

WHEREAS, in declaring a Climate Emergency the City of Berkeley resolved to call on the United States of America to initiate a just national emergency mobilization effort to reverse global warming, which ends national greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible and immediately initiates an effort to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, much of our infrastructure – streets, roads, sidewalks, storm drains, parks, the marina and waterfront – that is foundational were constructed more than 70 years ago during the Works Projects Administration; and

WHEREAS, in the face of these challenges we need to have infrastructure that is more sustainable and resilient; and

WHEREAS, we also have technology that is rapidly changing and infrastructure systems must be flexible and adaptable to future needs. Emerging technologies are becoming available that will affect the way we build and use our future infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley needs integrated and long-lasting infrastructure to provide multiple benefits, and be environmentally and financially sustainable; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley voters overwhelmingly approved Measure R in November 2018 to create a “30-year plan to identify and guide implementation of climate-smart, technologically-advanced, integrated and efficient infrastructure to support a safe, vibrant and resilient future for Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, replacing our infrastructure in this manner also provides a historic opportunity to create jobs, community wealth and address historically rooted racial and gender inequities; and

WHEREAS, a plan for a Green New Deal is the only plan, or framework to develop one, that meets the scale and speed that the climate and justice demand; and

WHEREAS, the plan for a Green New Deal reflects Berkeley’s climate and environmental commitments, as well as other elements of its economic development efforts such as the promotion of worker ownership, public banking, labor protections, and job training; and

WHEREAS, the Green New Deal calls for a nationwide investment in renewable energy infrastructure that would procure 100% of the national power demand from renewable sources, and create a national smart grid; and

WHEREAS, if passed the Green New Deal would accelerate current efforts underway county-wide through the creation of the East Bay Community Energy Authority, and local efforts to expand local renewable development, making existing and new buildings energy efficient and carbon neutral; and

WHEREAS, if passed a Green New Deal would expedite and enhance the important work already underway in Berkeley and provide much needed additional funding to allow our city to go farther and faster in these efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby supports the formation of a House Select Committee on a Green New Deal and the development of a Green New Deal economic stimulus plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the City Council thanks Congresswoman Barbara Lee for her endorsement of a Green New Deal and calls on all leaders in Congress to endorse such a plan; and

BE IT FURTHER AND FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be sent to U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Governor Gavin Newsom.