

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-17

[CORRECTING SCRIVENER'S ERROR IN RESOLUTION 2020-45]

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE 2018 CLIMATE PROTECTION ACTION PLAN TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL POLICIES AS RECOMMENDED BY STAFF AFTER REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM CLIMATE ACTION TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, climate change, if unchecked, will have ever increasing impacts on human health, natural systems, wildlife, and infrastructure, creating mounting costs for individuals, communities, businesses, and local governments; and

WHEREAS, the scientific consensus demands we limit global temperature increases below 1.5 degrees Celsius to avoid the most destructive and dangerous effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, an important first step toward achieving 100% renewable energy is to set a public long-term renewable energy target to demonstrate political commitment, and to provide both stakeholders and the community with an understanding of the long-term vision for the City of Bellingham ("City"); and

WHEREAS, "renewable energy" is herein defined as energy derived from hydrogen, wind power sited in ecologically responsible ways, solar, existing and low-impact hydroelectric, geothermal, biogas (including biogas produced from biomass), and ocean/wave technology sources; and

WHEREAS, "renewable energy" specifically excludes energy derived from fossil fuels, nuclear, biomass feedstocks sourced from state and federal lands, hydrogen produced from fossil fuels, and incineration of municipal and medical waste; and

WHEREAS, Washington State has already experienced long-term warming, longer and more intense fire seasons, sea level rising along most of the coast, ocean acidification, and decline in glacial area and spring snowpack; and

WHEREAS, the State Department of Ecology has reported that, "human caused climate change poses ~~and~~ an immediate and urgent threat"; and

WHEREAS, economists have concluded that Washington's families and businesses are likely to incur billions of dollars of annual economic costs if communities fail to drive reductions in greenhouse gas pollution. These economic impacts include increased energy costs, coastal and storm damage, reduced food production, increased wildland fire, and increased public health costs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham municipal government is responsible to ~~promote~~ promote the public health and safety of its residents including access to clean air, clean water, and a livable environment; and

WHEREAS, the entire community will be impacted by climate change; and communities facing socioeconomic and health inequities (such as youth, elders, communities of color, and low-income) will suffer disproportionately, requiring the City to invest in resilience that is proportionate and accountable to these Communities; and

WHEREAS, since time immemorial, the Coast Salish People have called home and been the stewards of what is now recognized as the City of Bellingham, and we shall all follow their example; and

WHEREAS, the Coast Salish People depend on healthy ecosystems for subsistence, and are disproportionately impacted by climate change threatening the health of fish, crustacean, and shellfish populations in the Salish Sea; and

WHEREAS, since 2005, the City of Bellingham Mayors and Councils have declared support for local, state, national, indigenous, and international commitments to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, in 2007 the Bellingham City Council passed Resolution 2007-10 adopting greenhouse gas reduction targets and a Climate Protection Action Plan to achieve those targets; and

WHEREAS, many of the measures proposed or underway in 2007 have been implemented, and the City exceeded the 2012 targets at both the municipal and community levels, and is on track to meet the 2020 municipal emissions reduction target; and

WHEREAS, the transition to 100% renewable energy will provide a range of benefits, including improved air quality, enhanced public health, increased national and energy security, local jobs, reduced reliance on finite resources, and will bring tangible benefits to low-income residents and others who have historically been disadvantaged by our energy system; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham has shown its commitment, declaring ambitious climate action goals commensurate with its obligations as a signatory of multiple international climate agreements, including the We Are Still In Declaration, the City's Climate Protection Action Plan, the Compact of Mayors, 100% Clean Energy, and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) Cities for Climate Protection; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham recognizes that while it is desirable and beneficial to set aggressive targets and transition to 100% renewable energy quickly, there are

numerous financial, technological and societal challenges that need to be addressed, including capacity; and

WHEREAS, the City's original 2007 Climate Protection Action Plan was updated in 2018 and adopted as policy by the Bellingham City Council under Resolution 2018-06; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Action Task Force was formed in 2018 to recommend additional policies to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gases; and

WHEREAS, in December 2019 the Climate Action Task Force presented their report of recommended policies the City could undertake to further reduce community greenhouse gas emissions beyond the current targets in the adopted 2018 Climate Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, staff have conducted analysis of all Climate Action Task Force recommendations, developed a process for assessing which of the recommended polices to advance for further consideration, and undertaken additional research on the feasibility of ten measures for inclusion in the 2018 Climate Protection Action Plan as policy of the City of Bellingham; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM:

The Climate Protection Action Plan will be amended to include the ten measures listed below in order to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from Municipal and Community sources. Development of programs to implement each of these policies will strive to mitigate and lessen impacts to Bellingham's housing costs, jobs, and energy infrastructure.

1) Create Efficiency Requirements for Owner-Occupied Residences

This policy allows for development of a new program to substantially expand residential energy efficiency and weatherization in owner-occupied homes in Bellingham.

2) Electrify New Buildings

This policy allows for development of an implementation plan for requiring the electrification of all new buildings built in Bellingham, while supporting a just transition with labor and our utility on electric capacity.

3) Encourage Statewide Ban on Internal Combustion Engines (ICE)

This policy allows for support of a state-wide ban on the sale of ICE passenger and light-duty vehicles by 2030 through 1) submitting a letter of Council support for a state legislative bill and 2) leading the formation of a coalition of other cities and interest groups in support of the bill.

4) Create Bellingham Clean Energy Fund

This policy allows for the development of a new funding source to advance measures within the Climate Protection Action Plan and other connected activities using

Greenways Levies as a potential funding model. Note: The *COB Carbon Fund* would gather revenue through the sale of locally generated carbon offsets whereas the *Bellingham Clean Energy Fund* could use a variety of sources for revenue.

5) ~~Evaluate COB and PSE Community-Wide Green Direct~~

~~This policy allows for further discussions with PSE to develop a new partnerships to provide low carbon renewable electricity for all Bellingham residents.~~

5) Evaluate Community Wide renewable energy programs.

This policy allows for further discussions to develop new partnerships to provide low carbon renewable electricity for all Bellingham residents.

6) Promote Electric and Hybrid Vehicles

This policy allows for the development of an implementation plan for lowering costs for electric vehicle (EV) ownership by investigating interest from stakeholders (dealerships, manufacturers, utilities, other jurisdictions, and City residents) in developing a Group Buy or EV Discount Program, and by considering the legal and procedural process for eliminating local sales tax for EVs where State exemptions do not apply.

7) Support Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing

This policy allows for the acceleration of energy efficiency in commercial buildings by sending a letter to the Whatcom County Council and Executive in support of the development of a Whatcom County C-PACER program and providing ongoing City support.

8) Create COB Carbon Fund

This policy allows for development of a potential Carbon Fund for the City of Bellingham through research on carbon sequestration markets and assessment of forested City properties for internal accounting of carbon offsets. Note: The *COB Carbon Fund* would gather revenue through the sale of locally generated carbon offsets whereas the *Bellingham Clean Energy Fund* could use a variety of sources for revenue.

9) High-Density Development

The Bellingham Comprehensive Plan supports higher-density development with parks, monuments, schools, and other public amenities (Policy LU-6). This policy allows the City to continue to implement and seek new, innovative tools to achieve a healthy mix of housing that is affordable to a wide range of incomes.

10) Increase Density in Transition/Residential Multi-Family (a.k.a. Missing Middle) Zones


This policy allows for development of a housing type that addresses issues associated with transition areas located between dense housing and commercial uses and single-family residential zones.

PASSED by the Council this 29th day of August, 2022.



Council President


APPROVED by me this 12th day of September, 2022.



Mayor

ATTEST: 

Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Office of the City Attorney