



Legislation Text

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Clerk 10/09/2019

A MOTION relating to communitywide greenhouse gas emissions; directing the executive to conduct further outreach and engagement with local governments and other stakeholders, and to develop a toolkit for local governments to use in planning, implementing and monitoring actions to reduce greenhouse gases.

WHEREAS, in October 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a special report concluding that humans must reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by forty-five percent by 2030 to limit global warming to one and one-half degrees Celsius, and

WHEREAS, warming beyond one and one-half degrees Celsius is projected to irreversibly impact food systems, water supplies, public health, economic growth and natural resources around the globe, and

WHEREAS, the past five years have been the hottest on record, and in 2017 global temperature rise surpassed one degree Celsius above preindustrial levels, and

WHEREAS, over seven hundred localities around the world have declared a climate emergency to drive efforts to prevent the worst effects of climate change, and

WHEREAS, every action to limit warming matters and every government, every community and every individual can play a role, but collective multisector coordination will be most effective in combatting climate change, and

WHEREAS, King County is already experiencing the impacts of climate change: more frequent wildfires, rising sea levels, declining mountain snowpack, worsening flood and drought risk and extreme heat, and

WHEREAS, unless adequately addressed, climate change will have devastating effects on regional economies, infrastructure, recreation, the natural environment, public health, safety and quality of life, and

WHEREAS, the effects of climate change will disproportionately impact frontline communities in King County that are predominantly low-income and communities of color who, due to historic systems of structural racism and oppression, have been limited in their capacity to mitigate and respond to climate impacts, and

WHEREAS, in 2016 King County adopted the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, which directs the county to consider equity and the disproportionate environmental burdens experienced by frontline communities in county investments and policy, and

WHEREAS, such a consideration requires active community engagement and outreach with frontline communities throughout policy and program development, and

WHEREAS, King County has a long history of commitment to combatting climate change and is a national leader in local climate action, and

WHEREAS, in 2014 King County and its thirty-nine cities developed countywide, community-scale greenhouse gas emission reduction targets of eighty percent by 2050 against a 2007 baseline, with benchmark target reductions of twenty-five percent by 2020 and fifty percent by 2030, and

WHEREAS, these targets were formally adopted as countywide planning policies by the King County Growth Management Planning Council in 2014 to guide the comprehensive planning of King County and its cities, and

WHEREAS, in 2015 King County convened the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration, which now includes membership by King County, sixteen cities and the Port of Seattle, representing eighty percent of the county's population, and adopted the Joint County-City Climate Commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across King County consistent with countywide planning policies, and

WHEREAS, in 2015 King County adopted the Strategic Climate Action Plan, which identified specific goals, strategies, measures, targets and over seventy priority actions related to transportation and land use,

building efficiency, green building, waste management and forests and agriculture to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in government operations and at the community scale, and

WHEREAS, King County has made progress since the 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan, including the Metro transit department transitioning to a zero-emission fleet, the county surpassing its energy-use goals in county-owned facilities and the county being on-track to source ninety-eight percent of its electricity supplies in Puget Sound Energy service territory from renewable energy in 2020 through Puget Sound Energy's green direct program, all of which have resulted in significant reductions in county government operational emissions, and

WHEREAS, King County has worked with its partners in the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration to implement programs to achieve community-scale goals, such as county support in the development of green building tools, enrollment of additional member cities and businesses in the green direct program and the containment of ninety-eight percent of new development within urban growth areas, and

WHEREAS, King County reports on countywide greenhouse gas emissions every two years, providing an estimate of communitywide emissions released within the county geographic boundary and resulting from community activities, and

WHEREAS, local government operations account for a small portion of communitywide greenhouse gas emissions, for example, King County government operations account for approximately one and seven-tenths percent of the county's communitywide emissions, and

WHEREAS, communitywide greenhouse gas emissions have decreased just one and four-tenths percent between 2007 and 2017, and are not on track to achieve the eighty percent reduction goal by 2050, and

WHEREAS, globally, cities are responsible for seventy percent of greenhouse gas emissions, and

WHEREAS, King County must work together with local governments in cooperation with a broader range of stakeholders, including the private sector and community members, to achieve significant communitywide greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and

WHEREAS, King County is positioned as a regional partner to support local governments and other stakeholders in acting to achieve communitywide goals, and

WHEREAS, available climate science and observable climate impacts have demonstrated the immense, urgent threat that climate change poses to public health and safety, which requires immediate and cross-jurisdictional action to reduce communitywide greenhouse gas emissions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The executive, building upon current efforts, should greatly expand efforts to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet established communitywide climate goals. As part of these expanded efforts, the executive should:

1. Partner with local governments to provide resources and build capacity to implement local and cross-jurisdictional climate initiatives, especially those outlined in the Joint County-City Commitments;
2. Expand partnerships with nongovernmental stakeholders and the broader community to drive actions to reduce emissions communitywide;
3. Develop a consistent and uniform system to track and report greenhouse gas emissions progress made by local governments across King County; and
4. Identify new and existing funding sources necessary to support that work.

B.1. The executive should engage a consultant to develop a robust climate action plan toolkit. The toolkit should include recommended actions and best practices to support the development and implementation of comprehensive local climate action plans by local jurisdictions and other partners to reduce communitywide emissions.

2. The climate action toolkit should enable the user to assess the user's jurisdiction's or agency's individualized needs, provide a comprehensive list of recommended actions to help reduce communitywide emissions and identify the expected co-benefits of those actions. The toolkit should include the following:
 - a. recommended approaches, resources and tools that local governments and other large

organizations can use to calculate a baseline of communitywide greenhouse gas emissions within their jurisdiction;

b. recommended actions for advancing Joint County-City Climate Commitments and reducing emissions in each of the following action categories. The recommended actions should be focused on reducing communitywide greenhouse gas emissions, but also include actions intended to support reductions in emissions from local government operations and water and energy utilities operations:

- (1) transportation and land use;
- (2) green building and energy efficiency;
- (3) consumption and waste management, including food;
- (4) forests and agriculture, including healthy city tree canopies and the promotion of carbon dioxide sequestration in soils; and
- (5) water and energy utilities operations.

3. To support development of actions, the toolkit should include:

- a. recommended approaches for assessing local greenhouse gas emissions sources, development patterns, and areas of local influence to identify and prioritize actions that will have the most impact in reducing emissions within the city and at the community scale;
- b. a comprehensive list of recommended actions, weighted based on their relative potential for emissions reductions and including information regarding their expected co-benefits such as public health, mobility, climate justice and equity, jobs and economic growth and the natural environment in jurisdictions with varying population sizes, land use patterns and emissions sources;
- c. policy actions, grant funding, utility incentives, business and community partnerships and financing strategies that can support implementation of actions;
- d. best practices for setting goals and targets, monitoring progress and publicly reporting actual greenhouse gas emissions reductions;

- e. best or emerging practices for public engagement, outreach and education to involve the broader community, and especially frontline communities, in reducing communitywide greenhouse gas emissions;
 - f. recommendations to assist the user in overseeing and coordinating climate actions in the various substantive areas to maximize the overall impact; and
 - g. recommendations for achieving climate justice and equity for frontline and disadvantaged populations.
4. When developing the climate action toolkit, the executive, with support from a consultant, should:
- a. collaborate with local jurisdictions and tribes, including King County-Cities Climate Collaboration partners, to develop strategies that can be implemented locally;
 - b. review other local government climate action plans and climate action planning toolkits that have been developed for other local governments;
 - c. engage with and incorporate input from the community, especially frontline communities, via workshops and other engagement with stakeholder groups, such as the King County Climate Equity Frontline Community Task Force, 350 groups, People for Climate Action and Climate Solutions;
 - d. engage with and incorporate input from other nongovernmental stakeholders such as local businesses, unions, and utilities; and
 - e. engage with King County council central staff and interested councilmembers.
5. The consultant's final work product should take the form of a climate action plan toolkit and a plan to distribute and promote its use by local governments, nongovernmental stakeholders, advocates and the community as a resource in decision-making and the implementation of local climate action plans. The distribution and promotion plan should include a convening of local governments to introduce the toolkit and explore areas for collaboration in its implementation.
6. No later than July 31, 2020, the executive should transmit to the King County council a motion approving the climate action plan toolkit, a summary of recommendations, a report detailing the outreach and

engagement process, feedback received and the plan to distribute and promote the toolkit's use. The motion shall be filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who will retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the mobility and environment committee or its successor.

7. The executive, in collaboration with local governments and other stakeholders, should conduct a preliminary review of the toolkit's adoption by local jurisdictions within two years of the time the toolkit is first issued. Further review and updates of the toolkit and its effectiveness should be conducted periodically thereafter.

8. The executive, in collaboration with local governments, should compile and publish a report every two years of available greenhouse gas emission reductions data from local governments across King County.