



Legislation Text

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Clerk 10/03/2006

A MOTION relating to county efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate their impacts and prepare for climate change.

WHEREAS, there is a consensus among the world's leading scientists that global warming pollution by humans is among the most significant problems facing the world today, and

WHEREAS, climate scientists at the University of Washington predict that average temperatures in the northwest will increase approximately one degree fahrenheit per decade in the twenty-first century, and

WHEREAS, climate change in the northwest is expected to result in reduced snowpack and associated drinking water supplies, changes in winter flooding patterns, reduced summer stream flows for fish and altered habitat for other wildlife, and

WHEREAS, in September 1988, Proposed Ordinance 88-662 was introduced with the intent of creating an office of science and technology planning to address the issues of ozone depletion and global warming, and

WHEREAS, in 2002 the King County executive signed Executive Order PHL 10-1(AEO), by which the executive created a countywide initiative to inventory and reduce global warming pollution caused by greenhouse gas emissions ("carbon" or "carbon equivalents"), and

WHEREAS, in January 2002, the council adopted Motion 11364 that approved participation in the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign and supported the executive's development of an action plan to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and targeted air pollutants from county operations, and

WHEREAS, the county has created one of the most comprehensive emissions inventories, also known as a carbon inventory, of any local government in the United States, and this work has built organizational

expertise and resources in the departments of King County for future emissions reduction planning and sale of carbon credits, and

WHEREAS, actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can also benefit local economies and improve quality of life through increased energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, waste reduction water conservation and open space protection, and

WHEREAS, management practices at the Cedar Hills landfill prevent more than three hundred thousand metric tons of methane-based greenhouse gas emissions annually from entering the atmosphere, and

WHEREAS, the county has initiated a gas-to-energy project at Cedar Hills that will convert methane gas to energy and further reduce gas emissions, and

WHEREAS, the county has also undertaken innovative energy cogeneration projects at its wastewater treatment plants, and

WHEREAS, King County Metro Transit provides more than one hundred million trips annually with a fuel efficient, environmentally friendly alternative to the private automobile, and

WHEREAS, King County Metro Transit received a 2004 National Clean Bus Leadership Award from the Environmental and Energy Study Institute for its role in developing a market for ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, and

WHEREAS, King County Metro Transit spurred development of an important new technology and realized a fuel savings of approximately twenty percent in 2004 with one of the first major fleet purchases of over two hundred diesel/electric hybrid buses, and

WHEREAS, the county, in partnership with private landowners and nongovernmental organizations, has protected more than one hundred thousand acres of forest land, and provides incentives and technical assistance for restoration of rural and urban forest land, and

WHEREAS, long-term forest uses can help to sequester carbon emissions that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere, and

WHEREAS, King County is the first local government in the nation to develop a Land Use, Transportation, Air Quality and Health ("LUTAQH") Initiative, that considers the impacts of development on air quality and human health, and

WHEREAS, LUTAQH Initiative found that higher density residential neighborhoods with a mixed land uses and a connected street network are associated with less automobile use, less air pollution, fewer greenhouse gas emissions and less energy consumption, and

WHEREAS, the King County Comprehensive Plan focuses new development within urban areas which helps to reduce vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions, and

WHEREAS, the region is currently updating Vision 2020 and King County is preparing for the next major update of its Comprehensive Plan, and

WHEREAS, on October 27, 2005, King County and its conference partners hosted a climate change conference with the goal to engage a broad cross-section of Washington State governments, businesses, tribes, farmers, nonprofits and the community at large in a dialogue about climate change impacts and potential adaptations, and

WHEREAS, the executive is developing a "Climate Change Toolkit" with guidelines, information and technical assistance on topics including emissions inventories, use of alternative fuels in transit and fleet management, energy co-generation at wastewater treatment plants and landfills, availability of and uses for reclaimed water, forest protection and restoration in urban and rural environments, land use planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and guidelines for adaptation of King County operations and policies to predicted climate changes, and

WHEREAS, the mitigation element of this toolkit will be based on the action plan created in response to emissions inventories conducted since 2002, and

WHEREAS, the adaptation element of this toolkit is being developed by the executive and is being refined in collaboration with the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group, the International Council on

Local Environmental Initiatives, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, local governments within King County and others initiating actions to address climate change, and

WHEREAS, in March 2006, the executive issued four executive orders to King County departments outlining actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change in four policy categories: land use, environmental management, renewable energy, public transportation and use of alternative fuels, and

WHEREAS, the city of Seattle has initiated a national campaign to encourage cities to endorse the United States Conference of Mayors climate protection agreement, and

WHEREAS, the United States Conference of Mayors climate protection agreement includes commitments to strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in local communities through actions ranging from antisprawl land use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns, to urge state governments and the federal government to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target of the Kyoto Protocol, and to urge the United States Congress to pass greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system, and

WHEREAS, metropolitan counties, with larger land areas, a mix of urban and rural land uses, regional transportation systems and regional infrastructure have a unique and complementary role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change;

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

A. King County shall work with other counties through cooperative intergovernmental frameworks like the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives and the Washington State Association of Counties to develop a model climate change resolution tailored to climate change actions that can adopted by county governments;

B. King County shall work with other counties active in climate change initiatives and with national organizations such as the National Association of Counties to kick-off a national, Counties Climate Change Initiative as a companion effort to the United States Conference of Mayors climate protection agreement;

C. King County shall finalize a Climate Change Toolkit by February 1, 2007 and make it available to local governments throughout the nation as part of a Counties Climate Change Initiative;

D. The executive shall develop a King County Climate Change Mitigation and Preparedness Plan ("the plan") and file eleven copies with the clerk of the council by February 1, 2007, for distribution to all councilmembers;

E. The plan shall include actions related to carbon inventories, land use, environmental management, emergency preparedness, energy use and transportation, and shall include specific performance measures for recommended actions;

F. Implementation of the plan and identified performance measures shall be monitored, and results and recommended changes shall be reported to the council annually as part of a King County Climate Change Report ("the annual report"), eleven copies of which shall be filed with the clerk of council by February 1 of each subsequent year, for distribution to all councilmembers;

G. With respect to emissions targets and annual emissions inventories:

1. King County shall commit to reduce net carbon emissions from county operations by six percent below year 2000 emissions by the year 2010;

2. King County shall continue to monitor its own carbon emissions annually, and report its findings as part of the annual report;

H. With respect to the impacts of land use on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change:

1. King County shall use land use and transportation plans, policies and regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by preventing sprawl and associated vehicle miles traveled, encouraging transit- and pedestrian-oriented development, conserving forest lands and maintaining vegetative cover;

2. King County shall continue to support forestry technical assistance, tax incentives, and property acquisitions as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration;

3. As part of updating King County's Shoreline Master program, King County shall consider the

impacts of climate change on shoreline erosion;

4. As part of the scoping motion for the 2008 King County Comprehensive Plan update, the executive shall outline a work plan for reviewing and updating policies related to air quality, climate and land use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to address impacts of climate change; and

5. It is the council's intent, through participation in the Growth Management Planning Board's Vision 2020 Update, to raise awareness of the relationship between land use and climate change and the role local governments can play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions;

I. With respect to environmental management and emergency preparedness:

1. King County shall maximize the creation of resources from waste products such as gases produced by wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal in a manner that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and produces renewable energy;

2. King County, consistent with the Regional Wastewater Services Plan, shall manage its wastewater treatment facilities and operations in a manner that minimizes greenhouse gas emissions, maximizes opportunities for the production of renewable energy and produces reclaimed water that can be used for industrial and irrigation purposes to help offset the potential impacts of climate change on summer stream flows and water supplies;

3. King County shall analyze the potential impacts of climate change on winter floods, and update its flood plan, capital improvement projects and emergency plans as necessary to respond to projected changes in winter flooding;

4. As part of the scoping motion for the 2008 King County Comprehensive Plan update, the executive shall outline a work plan for reviewing and updating policies for water resources, erosion and landslide hazards and fish and wildlife to address impacts of climate change;

J. With respect to energy use:

1. The executive shall develop a King County energy plan and file eleven copies of the plan with the

clerk of the council by February 1, 2007, for distribution to all councilmembers. The energy plan should include specific objectives and performance measures for minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy, increasing renewable energy purchases and continuing development of renewable energy sources including cogeneration projects;

2. King County shall set the following initial targets for renewable energy use:

a. At least fifty percent of King County's total nontransit energy use shall come from or be offset by renewable energy sources by the year 2012;

b. At least thirty-five percent of transit energy use shall come from efficiencies and renewable energy sources by the year 2015;

c. At least fifty percent of transit energy use shall come from efficiencies and renewable energy sources by the year 2020; and

d. The departments responsible for energy purchasing are directed to make this transition on a schedule that considers cost, available funding and public benefit associated with such purposes;

3. The county shall develop and monitor performance measures for use of renewable energy and report on these performance measures in the annual report. Reporting shall include total energy used, the percentage coming from renewable sources and updated information on cost and feasibility of meeting initial targets for conversion to renewable energy sources; and

K. With respect to transportation and use of alternative fuels:

1. In the short-term, the county shall set a target of increasing the amount of biodiesel used in all county diesel vehicles to twenty percent;

2. The county shall seek to use alternative fuels and hybrid and electric vehicles as technology and funding allow, with the intent of transitioning to a county fleet of vehicles and buses powered entirely by more climate-friendly renewable energy sources as technically feasible;

3. The county will implement aggressive transit, land use and transportation-demand strategies, such

as commute trip reduction and transit-oriented development, to encourage King County residents to use public transit as an alternative to single-occupancy vehicles;

4. The county shall design and implement a measurement program quantifying the progress of the coordinated strategies on increasing public transit ridership, biking and walking as a percentage of average King County daily travel and report on them as part of the annual report; and

5. The executive shall include a detailed approach and performance measures

for implementing transportation and alternative fuels actions in the plan, and report on them as part of the annual report.