

Resolve 5-12/13

Passage: 8-1 (Leeman) 12/17/12

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CITY OF PORTLAND
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**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS
POLLUTION UNDER THE CLEAN AIR ACT**

WHEREAS, according to the National Aeronautic and Space Administration, the decade from 2000 to 2010 was the warmest in recent historical climate record; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the current level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is approximately 392 parts per million (ppm); and

WHEREAS, one of the world's leading climate scientists, Dr. James Hansen, stated in 2008; "If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted, paleoclimate evidence and climate change suggest that carbon dioxide will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to almost 350 ppm;" and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determined that current and future greenhouse gas concentrations endanger public health and according to the Global Humanitarian Forum, climate change is already responsible every year for some 300,000 deaths, 325 million people seriously affected, and economic losses worldwide of US \$125 Billion; and

WHEREAS, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), extreme weather events, most notably heat waves and precipitation extremes, are striking with increasing frequency, with deadly consequences for people and wildlife; in the United States in 2011 alone, a record fourteen weather and climate disasters occurred, including droughts, heat waves, and floods, according to NOAA that cost at least \$1 Billion each in damages and loss of human lives; and

WHEREAS, according to scientists, climate change is affecting food security by negatively impacting the growth and yields of important crops, and according to the U. S. Global Change Research Program, droughts, floods, and changes in snowpack are altering water supplies; and

WHEREAS, scientists have concluded that by 2100 as many as one in ten species may be on the verge of extinction due to climate change; and

WHEREAS, according to the IPCC, the world's land-based ice is rapidly melting, threatening water supplies in many regions and raising sea levels, and according to scientists, Arctic summer sea ice extent has decreased to about half what it was several decades ago, and according to the Polar Science Center, an accompanying drastic

reduction in sea-ice thickness and volume, which, according to the Center for Biological Diversity and Care for the Wild International, is severely jeopardizing ice-dependent animals; and

WHEREAS, according to scientists, sea level is rising faster along the U. S. East Coast than it has for at least 2,000 years, and is accelerating in pace, and could rise by one to two meters in this century, threatening millions of Americans with severe flooding; and

WHEREAS, for four decades, the Clean Air Act has protected the air we breathe through a proven, comprehensive, successful system of pollution controls that save lives and creates economic benefits exceeding its costs by many times; and

WHEREAS, with the Clean Air Act, air quality in this country has improved significantly since 1970, despite major growth both in our economy and industrial production; and

WHEREAS, between 1970 and 1990, the six main pollutants covered by the Clean Air Act- particulate matter and ground-level ozone (both of which contribute to smog and asthma), carbon monoxide, lead, sulfur, and nitrogen oxides (the pollutants that cause acid rain)-were reduced by between 47 percent and 93 percent, and airborne lead was virtually eliminated; and

WHEREAS, the Clean Air Act has produced economic benefits valued at \$2 Trillion or 30 times the cost of regulation; and

WHEREAS, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in *Massachusetts vs. EPA* (2007) that greenhouse gases are "air pollutants" as defined by the Clean Air Act and the EPA has the authority to regulate them; and

WHEREAS, the City of Portland is a leader in the fight against climate change and for clean air as demonstrated through its programs and projects not limited to:

- Comprehensive energy efficiency upgrades made throughout City and School reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 4,110 metric Tons and saving over \$1 Million in energy costs per year;
- Signing the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement;
- Reducing solid waste generation and therefore greenhouse gas emissions through municipal recycling programs;
- Investing in a geothermal heating system at the Portland Jetport to reduce fuel oil use by 50,000 gallons per year.
- Promoting green building in Portland through a green building ordinance; and
- Promoting alternative energy generation in the community through a Wind Energy Ordinance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that climate change is not an abstract problem for the future or one that will only affect far-distant places, but rather climate change is happening now, we are causing it, and the longer we wait to act, the more we lose and the more difficult the problem will be to solve; and we, the Portland City Council, on behalf of the residents of Portland, do hereby urge the administrator of the EPA, Lisa P. Jackson, and President Barack Obama to move swiftly to fully employ and enforce the Clean Air Act to do our part to reduce carbon in our atmosphere to no more than 350 parts per million.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Clerk shall forward a copy of this resolution to Lisa P. Jackson of the EPA and President Barack Obama.