



CITY OF ALBANY CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Agenda Date: May 6, 2024

Reviewed by: NA

SUBJECT: Declaring a Climate Emergency and Calling for Urgent Action to Secure A Stable Climate

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SUMMARY

The action before the Council is the adoption of a Resolution declaring a climate emergency.

CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution for Albany Climate Emergency Declaration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt Resolution No. 2024-28, declaring a climate emergency and calling for urgent action to secure a stable climate.

BACKGROUND

The City of Albany Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) was adopted by the City Council in December 2019. The CAAP declared a state of climate emergency, acknowledging the shared responsibility to mitigate emissions to reduce the impact of our changing climate. Further, the CAAP recognizes the City as a climate leader, citing its support of the Paris Climate Agreement, membership in the Climate Mayors organization, and its progress on 2010 and 2019 CAP measures. Specifically, the CAAP also prioritizes Accelerating Resilience in its Strategies and Action section, emphasizing the need for climate adaptation and preparedness.

The Albany 2035 General Plan also states an awareness of the threat of a rapidly changing climate and the link between greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and global climate change. Moreover, Policy CON-3.2 and 3.3 call for climate change, as well as the potential impacts and mitigation options associated with it, to be a primary planning consideration and an educational outreach effort, respectively.

In 2006, the California legislature approved Assembly Bill 32—the Global Warming Solutions Act. AB 32 required California to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, an approximately 15 percent reduction from 2005 emission levels. AB 32 was followed by other

legislative and executive actions which established California as a leader in addressing climate change issues. The legislative actions include adoption of SB 375 in 2008, which requires the state's urban areas to grow in a way that is less dependent on fossil fuels.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Several other local jurisdictions have already declared a state of climate emergency, including Alameda County, City of Alameda, Berkeley, Hayward, Oakland, San Francisco, and San Leandro. Several of the nearby cities used a template from the Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force (CEMTF) a Bay Area coalition addressing inequities and causes of the climate emergency. The resolutions of nearby cities share commonalities in their vision, endorsing the presence of climate change as an imminent threat and outlining goals for an immediate just transition to restore a safe climate. The proposed declaration joins a collective effort in prioritizing climate goals and fostering community engagement, as well as encouraging an equitable transition to a fossil free future.

It is worth noting that a Climate Emergency Declaration at the local level acts more as a political statement and calls for regional collaboration but does not affect funding or create any legal mechanism for enacting climate policy. The proposed declaration emphasizes slightly different priorities than other cities. For example, it focuses on community call-to-action and education, whereas other jurisdictions place more emphasis on addressing the impacts on vulnerable populations and specific policy steps. Regardless, the City will continue to prioritize the CAAP goals to address the various impacts of climate change and use the declaration to reiterate the City's commitment and acknowledge the state of emergency that climate change poses.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed declaration is intended to be a reminder of the need to prioritize sustainability goals as outlined in the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and continue to strive towards a sustainable environment.

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

Ensuring that equity is centered in climate actions is a focal point of the declaration. It acknowledges the need for a just transition towards climate action, including the accommodation of resources to vulnerable populations.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE

The climate emergency declaration would advance City Council Strategic Plan Initiative Goal 1, Objective 1 to "Advance Climate Action and Adaptation."

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None.

Attachments

1. Resolution No. 2024-28 Albany Climate Emergency Declaration