



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0014-2014, **Version:** *

Res. No. 14

Resolution supporting President Obama's efforts to use the Clean Air Act to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and calling upon the Environmental Protection Agency and President Obama to fully enforce the Clean Air Act by regulating greenhouse gases in order to avert the potentially catastrophic effects of climate change.

By Council Members Levin, Chin, Constantinides, Ferreras-Copeland, Levine, Palma, Rosenthal, Williams, Johnson and Mendez.

Whereas, The decade from 2001 to 2010 was the warmest on record, and the years 2005 and 2010 are tied for the hottest years on record; and

Whereas, One of the world's leading climate scientists, Dr. James Hansen, stated in 2008 that "[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 at most 350 parts per million (ppm)"; and

Whereas, The Environmental Protection Agency determined that current and future greenhouse gas concentrations endanger public health, and, according to the Global Humanitarian Forum, climate change already seriously affects 325 million people, and is responsible for 300,000 deaths and \$125 billion in economic losses worldwide each year; and

Whereas, Extreme weather events, most notably heat waves and precipitation extremes, are striking with increased frequency, with deadly consequences for people and wildlife, such that in the United States in 2011 alone, a record 14 weather and climate disasters occurred, including droughts, heat waves, and floods, that cost at least \$1 billion each in damages and loss of human lives; and

Whereas, Climate change is affecting food security by negatively impacting the growth and yields of important crops, and droughts, floods, and changes in snowpack are altering water supplies; and

Whereas, Arctic summer sea ice extent has decreased to about half what it was several decades ago, with an accompanying drastic reduction in sea ice thickness and volume, which is severely jeopardizing ice-dependent animals; and

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

Whereas, The world's land-based ice is rapidly melting, threatening water supplies in many regions and raising sea levels; and

Whereas, Sea level is rising along the East Coast of the United States faster than it has risen for the least 2,000 years, is accelerating in pace, and could rise by one to two meters 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 saves 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 in our economy, population, motor vehicle travel, and industrial production; and

Whereas, The National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration reports that by October 2013 carbon monoxide levels reached 393 ppm; 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 dioxide, and nitrogen oxides (the pollutants that cause acid rain)-were reduced by between 47% and 93%, 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 regulations; and

Whereas, The United States Supreme Court ruled in *Massachusetts v. EPA* (2007) that greenhouse gases

are “air pollutants” as defined by the Clean Air Act and that, therefore, the Environmental Protection Agency has authority to regulate them; and

Whereas, Using authorities embodied in Section 111 of the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency is developing regulations to reduce greenhouse gas pollution from new and existing power plants; and

Whereas, The City of New York prides itself on being a leader in the fight against climate change and for clean air; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports President Obama’s efforts to use the Clean Air Act to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and calls upon the Environmental Protection Agency and President Obama to fully enforce the Clean Air Act by regulating greenhouse gases in order to avert the potentially catastrophic effects of climate change.

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