



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0877-2015, **Version:** *

Res. No. 877

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation that would establish a state carbon tax.

By Council Members Richards, Chin, Johnson, Cohen and Rodriguez

Whereas, Climate change is occurring at a rapid rate; and

Whereas, The current trend of warming in Earth's climate system over the last several decades is clear and unprecedented - the atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the sea level has risen, and snow and ice levels have decreased; and

Whereas, In the Northern Hemisphere, the temperature at the Earth's surface between 1983 and 2012 was likely the warmest 30-year period in the last 1400 years, and globally, each of the last three decades has been warmer than any decade since 1850; and

Whereas, Over the next 100 years, average global temperature is expected to warm twice as much as it has during the past 100 years, with a projected global temperature increase of 2°F to 11.5°F expected by 2100; and

Whereas, Over the last several decades, Arctic sea ice and Northern Hemisphere snow cover have decreased, ice sheets in the Antarctic and Greenland have lost mass, and glaciers worldwide have retreated at an accelerated rate; and

Whereas, Between 1901 and 2010, mean global sea level rose 7.48 inches, and the rate of sea level rise since the 1850 is greater than the rate for the 2000 years prior to 1850; and

Whereas, It is expected that, globally, sea ice, snow cover and glaciers will continue to diminish, and permafrost will continue to thaw; and

Whereas, The concentration of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere has been and is increasing, and this is a main cause of rapid climate change; and

Whereas, Greenhouse gases are gases in the Earth's atmosphere that have the physical property of absorbing solar radiation, trapping it in the atmosphere, and effectively acting like a blanket around the Earth, keeping it warmer than it would otherwise be; and

Whereas, The principal human activity that is affecting climate change is the emission of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, by burning fossil fuels such as coal, petroleum and natural gas; and

Whereas, Since 1750, the beginning of the industrial revolution, human activity has increasingly contributed to the concentration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere; and

Whereas, Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations have increased by almost 40% compared to the pre-industrial era; and

Whereas, According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the rate and magnitude of future climate change will depend in large part on the rate at which levels of greenhouse gas concentrations in Earth's atmosphere continue to increase; and

Whereas, Climate change threatens to impact New York City's public health, critical infrastructure, communities, vulnerable populations, natural systems, buildings and economy; and

Whereas, Impacts that are anticipated by experts such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the National Academy of Sciences, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, and the New York City Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, include severe weather such as droughts and hurricanes, human health impacts, environmental justice impacts, economic impacts, damage to infrastructure, sea level rise, changes to coastlines and coastal wetlands, disruption of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity; and

Whereas, The New York City Panel on Climate Change projects that by 2050, in New York City, extreme weather events are likely to worsen; heat waves are likely to increase in frequency, intensity, and

duration; heavy downpours are likely to increase in frequency, intensity and duration; and coastal flooding is likely to increase in frequency, extent, and height; and

Whereas, One way New York State can curb its contribution to climate change and help mitigate climate change impacts is by reducing its carbon dioxide emissions by establishing a state carbon tax; and

Whereas, A carbon tax is a tax levied on the carbon content of hydrocarbon-containing fossil fuels; and

Whereas, A New York State carbon tax could be imposed either at a fuel's point of distribution or production, if it is produced in the state; and

Whereas, By levying such a carbon tax on fossil fuels, the state would incent fuel consumers to reduce their use of such fuels, thereby reducing New York State's carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions; and

Whereas, By levying a carbon tax the state would also include in the price of fossil fuels the cost of negative externalities associated with the use of such fuels, such as air pollution and its impacts on public health, which impose real costs on society and which are not currently accounted for in the price of fossil fuels; and

Whereas, The implementation of a carbon tax could also make renewable energy resources a more cost-competitive, viable source of energy in New York State; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation establishing a state carbon tax.

BTM
LS 2508
4/24/2015 11:48 pm