

July 27, 2020

Council President Lorena Gonzalez

Subject: Council Select Committee on the Climate Crisis

Dear President Gonzalez:

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented damage to the health and economic well-being of our most vulnerable residents and to the city's revenues and budget; the Select Committee on the Budget chaired by Councilmember Mosqueda is appropriately addressing these issues. However, the pandemic also puts at risk the city's ability to effectively undertake the extraordinary measures needed to reduce Seattle's greenhouse gas emissions.

The 195 members of People for Climate Action - Seattle urge you to establish a Council Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. PCA's mission is to support the city in rapidly reducing carbon emissions. We are much more likely to be successful at this with one select committee having a comprehensive vision.

A Select Committee will underscore the central priority the Council and the City give to addressing climate change, a crisis which is a threat to our children, our grandchildren, and, in particular, to the least advantaged people in our city, as emphasized in the Council's 2019 Green New Deal Resolution.

A Select Committee will enable the coordination, collaboration and effective public engagement necessary to the development and implementation of a comprehensive climate strategy. Having five different council committees addressing different parts of the whole and bringing them separately to the full council is unlikely to produce a coherent set of priorities or to give climate action the urgent priority it requires. The current committee structure makes it difficult for the public to track and effectively engage with the Council's work on climate action.

Other committees would still have a role in the initial review of issues and recommendations and in the development of committee-related findings for consideration by the Select Committee.

In 2020 and 2021, the Council will make major decisions that determine how effectively we move forward on climate issues. In establishing a Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, the Council would show its understanding of the primacy of the climate crisis and its intersection with the pandemic, systemic racism, and growing economic inequality, and its willingness to face these problems honestly and forcefully.

Sincerely,

Iris Antman  
on behalf of People for Climate Action - Seattle

Steering Committee: Robin Briggs, Elizabeth Burton, Cindy Ervin, Keith Ervin, David Ramsay,  
Deejah Sherman-Peterson, Ron Sherman-Peterson