

September 16, 2020

Dear Councilmember [last name],

Council Resolution 31933 proposes to add to the Council's "Summary and Fiscal Note" a section reporting the climate change implications of a matter before the Council. People for Climate Action-Seattle urges the Council to pass this resolution in order to better include climate change in the Council's considerations. We understand it will come before the full Council at its meeting next Monday, September 21.

All this past week we have been in a public health crisis in Seattle that is largely due to the changing weather patterns and increased heat from climate change due to our own actions, primarily through our continued use of fossil fuels. The City of Seattle has adopted detailed goals and plans for reducing our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, specifically to reach zero net emissions by 2050. Unfortunately, emissions from Seattle are increasing rather than decreasing. We need to pay careful attention to each and every decision we make going forward if we are to actually bend the curve down. This new bit of information will help keep us on track.

The resolution as recommended by the Governance Committee is an important first step. PCA-Seattle endorses this proposal and will be watching carefully how it works out in practice. As it comes before you, it only asks for a qualitative description of possible impacts on GHG emissions. Programs and projects that are large enough will trigger an Environmental Impact Statement, which should include quantitative descriptions of GHG emissions. We believe you would also benefit by having quantitative analysis of some projects that do not trigger an EIS statement or at an earlier stage, before an EIS is prepared. We will be watching with you to see how this evolves and if it would be helpful to expand the requirement for quantitative reporting during the planned annual review.

Although the resolution mentions the importance of embodied carbon as a source of GHG emissions to be considered in one "whereas" clause, we believe that this is of sufficient importance that it should also be included in the text of the template. We propose that the attachment with the amended text of the template be further revised in Section 4f to include, as the third from the last sentence of part 1, the phrase "Include carbon already embodied in purchased materials, as described by the Carbon Leadership Forum" with a link to their website. This approach, developed by the University of Washington, has proven to be a key element in achieving our goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. In example projects, embodied carbon has been calculated to be equal to 20 years of operating emissions.

Again, PCA-Seattle urges the adoption of Resolution 31933 with the proposed addition of "embodied carbon" to the attached template.

Sincerely,

Deejah Sherman-Peterson
on behalf of People for Climate Action-Seattle