

March 11, 2021

Council President M. Lorena Gonzalez
Subject: Council Select Committee for Climate

Dear President Gonzalez and Council Members,

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 (GHG) emissions.

People for Climate Action-Seattle urges you to establish a Council Select Committee for Climate. PCA's mission is to support the city in reducing GHG emissions. We are more likely to be successful if the Council forms a new Select Committee for Climate which has a comprehensive focus on climate issues. A Select Committee for Climate will underscore the central priority the Council and the City must 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.

We appreciate the measures the Council took last year when it passed the JumpStart Seattle Plan in July, 2020, and a budget restoring funding and measures to address climate-related programs such as the OSE position to oversee the formation of the Green New Deal Oversight Board. We also appreciate the Council's long-term spending plan for the JumpStart Seattle Plan, declaring its intention to spend 9% of revenues, or about \$20 million per year starting in 2022, on advancing the Green New Deal through home electrification. The passage of Seattle's Updated Energy Code also promotes important steps in electrifying our buildings. However, these actions are not sufficient to achieve the 8% year-after-year reduction necessary for the city to meet its climate goals.

A Select Committee will enable the coordination, collaboration and effective public engagement necessary to the development and implementation of a comprehensive climate strategy. Having six different council committees (or possibly more) 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 urgency it requires. Also, 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 2021, the Council will make major decisions that determine how effectively we move forward on climate issues. In establishing a Select Committee for Climate, the Council would show its understanding of the primacy of the climate crisis and its willingness to face these problems honestly and forcefully.

Sincerely,

Iris Antman
on behalf of People for Climate Action-Seattle