



July 24, 2018

Dear Mayor Bowser and Members of the DC City Council,

I write on behalf of the members of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA) to inform you of the resolution passed at our April 17, 2018 general meeting urging the City Council of DC to enact legislation to address climate change.

BNCA is a local DC community organization dedicated to advancing the interests of the residents and local businesses of the Brookland neighborhood in Ward 5. We are an independent, non-profit organization under the laws of the District of Columbia, governed by an all-volunteer board comprised of residents of the neighborhood. We are primarily focused on issues of immediate local concern, such as support for local businesses, development planning, historical preservation, transportation and transit issues, and public safety.

Global climate change is an issue of immediate local concern to Brookland. The residents of Brookland, just like every other person on this planet, face an intolerable increase in extreme weather events, heat waves, flooding, degraded air and water quality, degraded habitats, loss of biodiversity, ruined infrastructure, and diminished economic prospects, all from the continuing emission of greenhouse gases.

In recognition of these severe risks and in the absence of federal leadership, the District of Columbia, along with many other state and local governments, has committed to meet the targets set in the Paris Agreement. This is laudable, but it is said that governments everywhere will need to achieve even deeper emission cuts than in the Paris Agreement in order to avoid catastrophic global warming. The District therefore must enact vigorous policy to meet, and exceed, its share of these commitments.

Some may ask, why should DC, which already has a strong renewable energy standard and which is a relatively small jurisdiction, do more to reduce its emissions, when larger jurisdictions aren't carrying their fair share? The answer is simple. DC still emits roughly 9 million tons of GHGs annually.<sup>1</sup> Let's assume every ton of GHGs emitted causes about \$40 of damage to the planet (which experts say is probably an underestimate). This translates into \$360 million in damages that DC's GHG emissions are doing to our environment annually. Thus, we believe there is a moral imperative to act, but it is also in our own economic self-interest.

At the same time that the scientific case for urgent action on climate change has become irrefutable, the overall effect of taking action to address climate change can be, through wise

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<sup>1</sup> DC Spending Plan for Volkswagen Settlement Funds (Beneficiary Mitigation Plan), at 4 (July 6, 2018), *available at* <https://doee.dc.gov/page/volkswagen-settlement>.

policy design, a net economic benefit in addition to the benefits to public health and the environment. The people of DC deserve to be at the forefront of an innovative, sustainable global economy. BNCA believes in a future for Brookland, and DC, that is clean, green, and prosperous for all.

It is also critical for the Council to recognize that Wards 5, 7, and 8 bear a disproportionate public health and economic burden from pollution.<sup>2</sup> This increases the urgency to act, and it also means that whatever policy is ultimately selected should take into account existing inequalities and protect the most vulnerable.

We understand that important policy questions remain under consideration by the Council as potential legislation is developed. We believe the legislation introduced by DC Councilmember Mary Cheh on July 10, 2018 (CleanEnergy DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2018, B22-0904) is a laudable approach. The Council should act expeditiously in enacting legislation such as this that will quickly and dramatically reduce DC's emissions of greenhouse gases.

As residents of Brookland, Ward 5, and the District of Columbia, the members of BNCA believe it is time for DC to do its part to address climate change.

Sincerely,



Daniel Schramm  
President, BNCA

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<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 4-8.