

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor



City and County of Denver

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To Members of Denver City Council:

Climate change represents an existential threat to humanity and life on this planet. Among all the challenges we face, the City and County of Denver and our residents rightfully expect that we will lead efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and our carbon footprint and do all we can as a community to protect the planet for future generations.

So, I am glad that City Council has embraced this issue and has been willing to put bold ideas forward.

Like you, I believe the science around climate change is real and requires us to take bold and immediate action. Denver has been a leader in this effort, and we have been even more aggressive and more emboldened in this work because Washington, under the Trump Administration, has been moving in the wrong direction.

Our Climate Adaptation and 80x50 Climate Action plans are prime examples of our leadership, as are Energize Denver, Green Buildings, 100 percent renewable electricity, vehicle electrification and the expansion of citywide recycling and composting. In most cases, these policies and programs were developed with significant public input and in partnership with the community. And while we do not always agree with Xcel Energy, we are fortunate to be served by perhaps the most progressive energy utility in the nation.

It is important that Council's SAFEHOUSE Committee is scheduled to receive two detailed and in-depth presentations from our climate, environmental and sustainability teams over the next week. I hope the information in these presentations and the ensuing conversations will help inform your deliberations on the new tax and new department proposals now pending before you.

Deeply concerning, however, is that these proposals have not benefitted from a true community and stakeholder engagement process, from a public and transparent analysis of costs and potential unintended consequences, and from a meaningful effort to build a coalition of supporters. I cannot stress enough the importance of engaging all segments of our community in this conversation, including low-income families, small businesses and those who may shoulder the burden of additional costs.

I encourage you to delay action on the two proposed bills and consider the following suggestions, commitments and clarifications:

- Please join me and my Administration in creating and implementing a detailed, methodical and intentional process to engage stakeholders, identify gaps in our workplans, review funding needs and revenue sources, and understand the costs and consequences of those sources. This would be a facilitated process bolstered by blue-ribbon subject-matter experts. The goal will be

to arrive at a consensus proposal to significantly enhance and accelerate Denver's climate work by June 2020, including a possible measure for referral to the November 2020 ballot.

- I am in the process of immediately creating a new Office of Climate, Resiliency and Sustainability within the Department of Public Health and Environment. This new office will be led by a Mayoral Appointee who will sit on my cabinet and provide clear leadership to myself, City Council and the entire Administration on these issues. The new office will combine the existing Office of Sustainability and the Climate group within DDPHE's Environmental Quality division, and will work closely on our climate initiatives with the Office of Health Equity, which is also housed in DDPHE. We are currently recruiting for this new appointee and the office will be established within the next couple of months.
- I have spoken to Gov. Polis about the importance of regional and statewide efforts to combat climate change. While cities must lead, our actions will be even more impactful at the regional and statewide levels. I am committed to forging formal partnerships at those levels and welcome your involvement on this front.
- I will be submitting my proposed 2020 budget to Council for your consideration in mid-September. While we are still in the midst of crafting the budget, I anticipate an expansion of the work currently underway to decarbonize Denver and propel us toward 100 percent renewable energy.
- I have directed agency heads and staff to immediately identify policies that can be implemented with the urgency necessary to combat climate change. I welcome your involvement in the review and implementation of these policies, including but not limited to:
 - Accelerating electric vehicle purchases for city fleets and the installation of electric vehicle infrastructure;
 - Requiring all new city buildings to meet net-zero energy and net-zero carbon standards;
 - Increasing the use of energy performance contracts for city facilities.

In closing, I share Council's desire to act boldly and swiftly. I believe we can be both bold and swift by working together, engaging our community and addressing the many questions and concerns about the two proposed bills before you. I believe we can lead the nation in addressing climate change and engaging our community. For the sake of our children and future generations to come, you have my commitment to a meaningful partnership that achieves real and lasting change.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hancock', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor