



March 24, 2016

Honorable Paul Koretz
200 North Spring Street, Suite 440
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: CF# 14-0907--Support for 80% GHG Cuts in Los Angeles by 2050

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Dear Councilmember Koretz,

We are writing to express our endorsement for the initiative to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Los Angeles 80% below 1990 levels by the year 2050. The Center for Biological Diversity (the “Center”) is a non-profit organization with offices throughout California and the United States, and more than 120,000 members and supporters in California. The Center’s mission is to ensure the preservation, protection and restoration of biodiversity, native species, ecosystems, public lands and waters and public health. In furtherance of these goals, the Center’s Climate Law Institute seeks to reduce greenhouse emissions and other air pollution to protect biological diversity, the environment, and human health and welfare.

This initiative is urgently needed to respond to the climate crisis. As the EPA stated in its landmark 2009 Final Endangerment Finding under the Clean Air Act, “the body of scientific evidence compellingly supports [the] finding” that “greenhouse gases in the atmosphere ... endanger public health and ... welfare.”¹ Since 2009, evidence demonstrating the need for deep and rapid greenhouse emission reductions has mounted rapidly.

Climate change threatens the basic human health and well-being of U.S. communities—particularly, the most vulnerable populations of low-income and minority communities, children, the elderly, and the sick.² With respect to climate change impacts on air quality, of particular importance in Los Angeles, climate change is expected to increase the air pollution components that trigger asthma attacks, specifically air particulates and ozone.³ Nationally, projected climate-related increases in ground-level ozone concentrations in 2020 could lead to an average of 2.8 million more occurrences of acute respiratory symptoms, 944,000 more missed school days, and

¹ Final Endangerment Finding, 74 Fed. Reg. at 66,497.

² See, generally, Third National Climate Assessment.

³ A.S. Bernstein and S. S. Myers, *Climate Change and Children’s Health*, CURRENT OPINION IN PEDIATRICS 23:221–6 (2011).

over 5,000 more hospitalizations for respiratory-related problems.⁴ These results are particularly devastating for vulnerable populations already living in areas of nonattainment. According to the EPA Endangerment Finding, climate change impacts of “[i]ncreases in ambient ozone are expected . . . to increase serious adverse health effects in large population areas that are and may continue to be in nonattainment,”⁵ exacerbating their public health conditions.⁶

Setting this reduction target because it is thus also critical to the region’s ability to meet the air pollution standards and deadlines under the Clean Air Act. The California Air Resources Board, for example has found that in order to meet both our climate change goals and our particulate matter and ozone deadlines, we must reduce NOx emissions by almost 90% by 2032.⁷ This is because GHGs and traditional air pollutants are inextricably linked. For example, many GHGs are also criteria pollutants (ozone and NOx, for instance), and climate change worsens ground-level ozone pollution. In addition, reducing GHGs also reduces co-pollutants, including VOCs and NOx, which are the main contributors to LA’s intractable smog.

Because fossil-fuel combustion is the largest contributor to global warming, a rapid and just transition away from fossil fuels and to 100% clean, renewable energy. Thus, the Center strongly supports the goal of 80% reduction below 1990 levels by 2050, and indeed, encourages the City to attain the reductions sooner.

We applaud you for championing this motion, and urge other members of the City Council to vote for this proposal to demonstrate Los Angeles’s leadership in addressing the issue of climate change.

Sincerely,



Maya Golden-Krasner
Climate Staff Attorney
Center for Biological Diversity

cc: Andy Shrader, andy.shrader@lacity.org

⁴ UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS, RISING TEMPERATURES AND YOUR HEALTH: RISING TEMPERATURES, WORSENING OZONE POLLUTION (2011), http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/global_warming/climate-change-and-ozone-pollution.pdf.

⁵ Final Endangerment Finding, 74 Fed. Reg. at 66,497.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ California Air Resources Board, *Vision for Clean Air: A Framework for Air Quality and Climate Planning* (Public Review Draft, June 27, 2012), available at http://www.arb.ca.gov/planning/vision/docs/vision_for_clean_air_public_review_draft.pdf.