

Date: February 12, 2021

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

Subject: **Sustainable City Commission Policy Priorities for 2021**

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At its meeting on January 28, 2021, the Sustainable City Commission (Commission) approved a recommendation to transmit the attached letter to the Mayor and City Council regarding the Commission's policy priorities for 2021.

If you would like any further information regarding this communication, please contact Larry Rich, Sustainability Coordinator, at (562) 570-5839 or via email at [Larry.Rich@longbeach.gov](mailto:Larry.Rich@longbeach.gov).

ATTACHMENT

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## 2021 Sustainability Priorities for Consideration by the Long Beach City Council

Honorable Mayor Garcia and City Councilmembers:

We begin 2021 with a tremendous amount of gratitude for your leadership during each of the challenges of 2020, and sympathy for the personal loss that was endured. We turn to you now with hope that in this new year we will contain the spread of COVID-19, and start to see recovery and prosperity for our residents and businesses.

As the Sustainable City Commission communicated to you on the eve of this new decade, our City is experiencing the impacts of climate change and environmental injustice that are threatening our public health and safety. We asked the City Council to prioritize actions to:

- Decarbonize trucking fleets and on-dock rail that serve the Port of Long Beach and impact frontline communities,
- Phase out fossil fuel production by pursuing local renewable energy generation, and initiating a Community Choice Energy (CCE) service, and
- Prevent plastics from polluting our community and marine environment.

In 2020, we asked our civic organizations and City Departments to share how they are addressing environmental justice issues in their operations. We held several community discussions on environmental equity, and were joined by the City Council's Environmental Committee in submitting recommendations to the City Council to incorporate environmental equity, and a just transition to green jobs, into the City's Framework for Reconciliation, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), and consideration of a CCE Implementation Plan.

Even with all of 2020's hardships, some progress was made, and you and City staff delivered on several sustainability initiatives. The approval of the CAAP is promising, and the strong passage of Measure US will place an additional tax on oil production, raising funds for climate and youth programs. However, the concerns regarding air and water quality, plastic pollution, and delay of the CCE service remain. Pollution has been exacerbated by the boom in trade at the Port, and over-use of disposable plastic materials across the city with no feasible way to recycle the waste generated.

In the State of the City, Mayor Garcia acknowledged that **the science is clear, the climate is changing**, and called on us to **end our dependence on oil**. For Long Beach to have a real chance at doing that, we need to invest in low and zero-emission technologies at the Port, support AQMD's efforts to require warehouses to reduce emissions (Proposed Rule 2305), and we have to fight the fossil fuel industry's push of single-use plastics onto the marketplace.

First, the City and Port must prioritize a renewed and serious commitment to transitioning truck fleets and Port operations to reduce emissions. While the Port has continued its community grant programs, it has delayed action on its climate plan, and adopted the lowest rate for the Clean Truck Fund program. This program is meant to assist with the

transition to clean trucks by 2035, and the current level of funding proposed will not meet that goal. With the record-breaking levels of activity experienced at the Port, we need to do better. The layer of diesel haze from the nearly 30 ships that are waiting off our coastline to enter the ports is easily visible. This is in addition to the emissions from the trucks that transport the goods to warehouses across the region.

Second, the City should support AQMD's efforts to seek the cooperation of warehouse operators in reducing emissions from their line of business. For the latter half of 2020, the Port broke records each month, moving the most tonnage in its 110-year history. While the increased trade is beneficial to economic growth, we cannot forget the environmental cost that is borne by our frontline communities. Warehouse operations have a part to play in the transportation of goods, and must share in the responsibility.

Lastly, our dependence on oil does not lie solely with the transportation sector and trucking industry. The fossil fuel industry has heavily invested in the production of cheap, single-use plastics – with no thought placed into the management of the waste that is being generated. That burden falls on the City and the community. The City has adopted good policies prohibiting the use of foam and several plastic materials, but without strong enforcement we see first-hand how these materials continue to proliferate. The City can continue seeking community reports of violations, and consider tying business license renewal to compliance with City codes, or other incentives.

As our new Administration is now taking climate action at the Federal level seriously, and calling for a carbon-free energy sector by 2035, the City of Long Beach can implement similar goals at the local level. In summary, these five policy actions carry forward last year's priorities, and have broad interest and support from our community:

1. Adopt the CAAP with binding annual and 2035 targets for carbon neutrality, and implement programs through a lens of environmental equity.
2. Decarbonize transportation sector: emphasize transition of trucking fleets, Port operations, and warehouses to reduce poor air quality in frontline communities.
3. Support legislation to fight single-use plastics, enhance City enforcement efforts, and tie business license renewals to compliance with municipal codes.
4. Phase out fossil fuel production, and focus on just transition to green jobs.
5. Initiate Implementation Plan for Community Choice Energy service.

Please know that we are here to serve, and happy to assist in any way that we can. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Sona Coffee*

Sona Coffee  
Chair, Sustainable City Commission

Sustainable City Commissioners: Sona Coffee, Chair; Morgan Wheeler, Vice Chair  
Alan Tolkoff; Carla Dillon; Coby Skye; Donna Bergeron-Birge; Eric Rock; Hilda Gaytan; Jenny Novak;  
Rey Gonzales