

MOTION

We are facing a climate emergency of historic magnitude that unfairly and disproportionately impacts low-income communities of color whose well-being is too often compromised due to the lasting legacy of discriminatory policies and institutional racism. While these inequities have long been challenged by Black, Brown, and Indigenous frontline communities fighting back against hazardous land uses, extractive economies, lax regulations, and intentional neglect, local governments must also take the lead in correcting environmental disparities affecting constituents who have been historically marginalized.

“Environmental Justice” is defined in federal and state law as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. (Cal. Gov. Code, § 65040.12, subd. (e).) California is a key leader in enacting laws specific to environmental justice, including legislation directing funds to impacted communities (SB 535 and AB 1550), creating a community air quality protection program (AB 617), conducting climate vulnerability assessments and integrating adaptation strategies into plans (SB 379), and requiring environmental justice to be addressed in local government planning (SB 1000).

The City of Los Angeles has a vital and decisive role to play in responding to environmental racism and advancing social equity. As directed by state legislation, the Department of City Planning undertook a comprehensive update of the Housing Element, a targeted update of the Safety Element, and made targeted amendments to environmental justice policies and programs in the City’s General Plan and Health and Wellness Element for compliance with SB 1000.

These are critical first steps to meet the needs of the City’s current and future residents. We must take further action to solidify our commitment to racial and environmental justice. SB 1000 emphasizes the importance of civic engagement in the formulation of environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives. Accordingly, and as called for in companion efforts per CF 15-0103-S2 and CF 21-1071, the City should undertake a robust community engagement process to assess climate risk, social vulnerability, and community resiliency and develop environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives.

These are critical first steps to meet the needs of the City’s current and future residents. We must take further action, however, to solidify our commitment to racial and environmental justice and build off of the work already initiated . SB 1000 emphasizes the importance of civic engagement in the formulation of environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives. Accordingly, the City should undertake a robust community engagement process to assess climate risk, social vulnerability, and community resiliency and develop environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Department of City Planning to report back within 90 days following the adoption of the 2021-2029 Housing Element with a detailed work plan and timeline for a comprehensive review and update to the Health and Wellness Element and/or the General Plan Framework Element and/or the creation of a standalone Environmental Justice Element to guide the City’s climate, land use, and housing

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policies alongside the citywide rezoning program. This work plan should include funding, staff, and resources required to carry out this critical task. Additionally, the report should:

- Conduct an evaluation of Chapter 8 “Implementation Programs” of the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, also known as the Health and Wellness Element, that identifies the barriers, challenges, and opportunities for successful implementation;
- Identify impacted and disadvantaged communities using CalEnviroScreen and other demographic data highlighting housing insecurity and climate displacement risk, proximity to freeways and noxious land uses, formerly redlined areas and current high opportunity and high poverty areas, and other important population characteristics that capture environmental racism;
- Develop a strategy for thorough public outreach and community engagement, especially to marginalized, historically underserved, and disadvantaged communities;
- Establish and convene an Environmental Justice Working Group composed of resident leaders and community organizations representing impacted communities, subject area experts, and City staff from relevant departments to co-develop targeted environmental justice priorities, policy recommendations, and solutions-oriented implementation actions;
- Detail a process to conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment in order to guide priorities in climate adaptation, emergency and safety preparedness, risk management, and community resilience; and
- Include a plan for regular maintenance and updates to the City’s General Plan to ensure that it exceeds state standards, exemplifies best practices in environmental justice planning, and maintains active stakeholder involvement.

PRESENTED BY:


NITHYA RAMAN

Councilmember, 4th District


CURREN D. PRICE, JR.

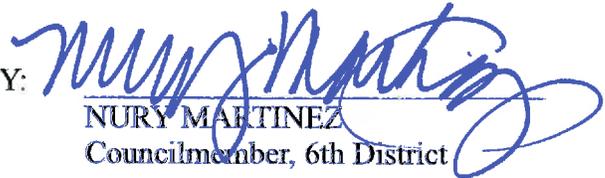
Councilmember, 9th District



MIKE BONIN

Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY:


NURY MARTINEZ

Councilmember, 6th District

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