

Communication from Public

Name: David M. Hondula

Date Submitted: 05/05/2022 09:33 AM

Council File No: 21-1277

Comments for Public Posting: Honorable Members of Los Angeles City Council: I write in support of the proposal to designate a staff member from the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office to serve in a leadership role for the City's efforts related to extreme heat, and to prepare a budget request and review of position authority to support that appointment. In 2021, Phoenix City Council created the first publicly-funded Office of Heat Response and Mitigation in the country as part of a larger Climate and Heat Readiness Investment in our general fund. I have the honor of serving as the Director of that new Office. Academics, practitioners, and community members have been calling for local governments to elevate and institutionalize their response to the growing hazard of extreme heat for many years. Last fall, a publication in Nature, one of the world's leading scientific journals, stated that "Cities need heat governance to plan for extreme temperatures and protect those most at risk." My observations and experiences over the first seven months serving in this role provide ample affirmation that formal designation of, and investment in, staff positions explicitly focused on extreme heat can yield significant benefits for the community. Our office has received dozens of ideas for new projects, initiatives, and policy directives from colleagues in city government, other public institutions, and the public at large. There is tremendous demand--and expectations--for our new office, and I am confident that the same would be true in communities across and beyond the Southwest. In some contexts, we are positioning ourselves as allies to provide additional support and rationale for community investments in sheltering options, urban forestry, healthy streets, and other efforts that directly and indirectly address different components of the extreme heat challenge. In other contexts, we recognize the need to push our municipal processes in new directions to reverse a rising trend in heat-related illness and patterns of inequitably distributed impacts. As one indication of the need and support for designated heat leadership: our office led the authorship of the City of Phoenix's first Heat Response Plan, which outlined 30 different City programs and services that strive to keep people comfortable and safe during our long summers. The Plan was passed unanimously by Phoenix City Council this March and was accompanied by requests from City Council members to allocate additional

funding to support various aspects of the Heat Response Plan. Our office benefits from a wide range of partnerships that help us holistically understand the extreme heat challenge in our community and implement solutions. Beyond partnerships with nearly every other City Department, we are also fortunate to have forged a close working relationship with our local and state health departments, the local forecast office of the National Weather Service, research partners at state universities and regional community colleges, and local and national non-profit organizations. We are thankful to receive guidance on our efforts from a City-sanctioned advisory board, as well. The landscape of heat governance is rapidly evolving across the United States at all scales of government, and the City of Los Angeles is positioning itself to be at the leading edge of that movement. I support the recommendation of the Chief Legislative Analyst and offer my support and partnership. Extreme heat is one of our nation's deadliest weather hazards and cities must have a leadership role in addressing that hazard as we move into a warmer future. Most respectfully, David M. Hondula, Ph.D. Director, Heat Response and Mitigation City of Phoenix, Arizona