

Offered by Councilor Matt O'Malley



**AN ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS  
THE PHASES OF IMPLEMENTING  
NET-ZERO-CARBON REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL  
NEW BUILDINGS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON**

- WHEREAS:** The City of Boston is committed to reducing reliance on fossil fuels and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050; and
- WHEREAS:** Buildings contribute to three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Boston; and
- WHEREAS:** Carbon neutrality, or having a net-zero-carbon footprint, refers to achieving net-zero-carbon emissions by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset; and
- WHEREAS:** The Committee of Environment, Resiliency, and Parks of the Boston City Council submitted a report with eleven policy suggestions on 2018 Docket #0263 on the benefits of net-zero-carbon requirements for future construction on September 17, 2018; and
- WHEREAS:** The Committee held a hearing on 2019 Docket #0185 on requiring that all new municipal buildings be net-zero carbon in the City of Boston on March 21, 2019; and
- WHEREAS:** On December 11, 2019, Mayor Martin J. Walsh passed an Executive Order requiring that all new municipal building construction be low-energy and fossil-fuel-free, with a mix of on- and off-site renewable energy assets; and
- WHEREAS:** On January 29, 2019, the Boston Green Ribbon Commission released the Carbon Free Boston Summary Report, which identifies the specific and measurable steps the City of Boston must take to meet its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, which includes deepening energy efficiency while reducing demand, increasing electrification, and purchasing 100% clean energy, as well as that all buildings must be net-zero carbon; and
- WHEREAS:** The City of Boston's 2019 Climate Action Plan Update details seven strategies to increase carbon reduction from buildings over the next five years, which includes strengthening the green building zoning requirements to a net-zero-carbon standard; and
- WHEREAS:** Building developers are now required to submit a Carbon Neutral Building Assessment as part of Article 37 zoning review requirements; and
- WHEREAS:** The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) plans to lead a public process to develop new zoning requirements and a timeline for implementation; and

**WHEREAS:** The Department of Neighborhood Development's Guidebook for Zero Emissions Buildings found little to no cost increase for building affordable housing to net-zero-carbon standards and that with rebates and incentives have the potential to make these buildings less expensive to build with additional long-term operational savings; and

**WHEREAS:** The USGBC MA's *Zero Energy Buildings in Massachusetts: Saving Money from the Start* report found that net-zero-carbon buildings are being built in Massachusetts today with zero additional up-front costs; and

**WHEREAS:** The unequal levels of environmental hazards from carbon emissions disproportionately increase the levels of respiratory illnesses and autoimmune diseases and populations with prolonged exposure have a median diminished life expectancy of 30 years; and

**WHEREAS:** Communities of color in urban areas of Massachusetts are exposed to more indoor and outdoor air pollution and suffer disproportionately from diseases associated with air pollution, including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); and

**WHEREAS:** Low-income communities and communities of color face a robust development pipeline, it is imperative that all new construction must reduce the amount of existing air pollution and contribute to the long-term public health of the neighborhood; and

**WHEREAS:** The City of Boston will be able to accelerate toward their carbon neutrality goals by coordinating with key stakeholders and implementing a strategic approach of requiring new zoning regulations and energy use intensity (EUI) reporting for various types of buildings; and

**WHEREAS:** The City of Boston has led on environmental initiatives and exhibited local leadership in combating global climate change; and **THEREFORE BE IT**

**ORDERED:** The Boston City Council, hereby assembled, orders a hearing to discuss the phases of implementing net-zero-carbon requirements for all new construction, including commercial, industrial and large residential and small residential buildings in the City of Boston. Representatives from the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA), Environment, Energy, and Open Space Department (EEOS), Boston Clean Energy Coalition (BCEC), Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Green Ribbon Commission, and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

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