

PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE

MOTION ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

In early March, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, and by early May the world had seen nearly 4 million confirmed cases and nearly 300,000 deaths from the disease. The United States declared a national emergency in mid-March and the numbers have continued to multiply, as different parts of the country have put into place different mitigation policies and as a result, experienced varied levels of COVID-19 activity. In California, as early as March 4, Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency, making additional resources available to help prepare for the broader spread of COVID-19, and on March 19 the state became the first in the nation to set mandatory stay-at-home restrictions to help combat the coronavirus.

These restrictions have undoubtedly come with hardships. But with cars sequestered in garages, thousands of airplanes on the ground, all Californians under some form of self-isolation or quarantine, and places of work temporarily closed, we have also seen a number of positive environmental effects. One analysis conducted by Carbon Brief in early April estimated that globally this year emissions could fall by 5.5 percent from 2019 levels, 2.5 percent greater than the reduction in emissions that followed the 2008 financial crash. In Los Angeles, air pollution has declined, and traffic jams have all but vanished. Preliminary data from the European Space Agency's Sentinel-5P satellite has shown that atmospheric levels of nitrogen dioxide, which are influenced in large part by car and truck emissions, were considerably lower in the first two weeks of March compared to the same period last year. And UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability found a 20 percent gain in air quality in Southern California, and statewide traffic reductions of 80 percent.

However, when the City's Safer at Home Order is lifted and Angelenos return to life as usual, so too will the pollution that clouds the skies and with it the greenhouse gases that fuel global warming. In fact, the rebound could be even worse. In the initial aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008, global CO2 emissions decreased by 1.4 percent, only to rise by 5.9 percent in 2010. And the crisis this time could have a longer-term impact on the environment — at far greater cost to human health.

Nowhere is the human and economic cost of air quality more apparent than in Southern California. In the South Coast Air Basin, air pollution in the form of ozone and particulate matter, which comes almost exclusively from the use of fossil fuels, causes staggering health problems. And Los Angeles far surpasses its neighboring south coast counties in related adverse health effects such as premature and post-neo natal mortality, respiratory symptoms and bronchitis, and non-fatal heart attacks. It also leads the pack in respiratory related hospital admissions, asthma related emergency room visits, school absences, restricted activity days for minors, and work loss days. According to Physicians for Social Responsibility, the cost of these air pollution related effects is \$1,250 per person per year. This translates to a total of nearly \$22 billion in costs per year that could be avoided if federal ozone, carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) standards were met.

The City of Los Angeles and many businesses in the region have made significant investments in technology and their workforce to maintain operations during the Safer at Home Order, and some industries will carry over these investments in the long-run as businesses look to recover and leverage technology to improve resiliency. Roles that have always been performed from an office location are now being considered for remote work, telecommuting and/or staggered work days. The City of Los Angeles has a responsibility and role to play in encouraging and incentivizing these changes.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst, with the assistance of the Los Angeles City Health Commission, County Department of Public Health, and Southern California Air Quality Management District, as needed, be instructed/requested to report back on the health and economic costs associated with ozone related, carbon monoxide related, and PM 2.5 related adverse health effects on residents in the City of Los Angeles.

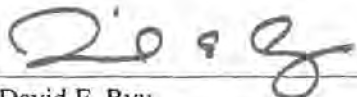
I FURTHER MOVE that the Personnel Department, Information Technology Agency and General Services Department, with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst and City Administrative Officer, be instructed to report back on the feasibility of implementing a remote work, telecommute and/or staggered work day program for City employees who are able to effectively carry out their job responsibilities and assigned tasks from an off-site location.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Personnel Department, Information Technology Agency, and General Services Department, with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst, City Administrative Officer be instructed to report back with an analysis and cost comparison of providing for traditional on-site office space versus remote off-site office space, including but not limited to the average cost of rental space, utilities, office furniture, supplies, equipment, information technology services, and work with external non-governmental partners such as chambers of commerce and economic development corporations, as needed, to develop the analysis.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Administrative Officer, with the assistance of the Office of Finance, Economic and Workforce Development Department, Chief Legislative Analyst, and any other departments, agencies or external non-governmental partners, as needed, be instructed to report back on any financial and/or fiscal mechanisms the City could employ to incentivize private businesses within the City of Los Angeles to adopt remote work, telecommuting and/or staggered work day programs for employees.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst and City Administrative Officer be instructed to report back on the availability of any federal, state or local funding that could be used to offset costs incurred by the City for the administration of a citywide remote work, telecommuting and/or staggered work day program.

PRESENTED BY: _____



David E. Ryu
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY: _____

PAUL KORETZ (verbal)
Councilmember, 5th District