



Legislation Text

---

File #: Res 0657-2004, Version: \*

---

Res. No. 657

Resolution calling upon the Council of the City of New York to support passage of S. 139, the *Climate Stewardship Act*, in the United States Senate, which would provide for a program of scientific research on abrupt climate change and accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States by establishing a market-driven system of greenhouse gas tradeable allowances that could be used interchangeably with passenger vehicle fuel economy standard credits.

By Council Members James, Clarke, Fidler, Quinn, Recchia Jr., Sanders Jr., Seabrook and Lopez

Whereas, The disturbing prospect of global warming caused by the “greenhouse effect”, has garnered ever-increasing attention over the last decade; and

Whereas, The 20th Century's ten warmest years all occurred in the last fifteen years of the century, with 1998 having been the warmest year on record; and

Whereas, The emission of heat-trapping greenhouse gases from motor vehicles, including carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, is one of the leading causes of global warming; and

Whereas, These emissions cause a buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which keeps the sun’s heat from escaping; and

Whereas, This thickening blanket of heat-trapping pollution is raising temperatures all over the world; and

Whereas, According to the Sierra Club, if emissions from United States automobiles were considered to be emissions from a separate country, they would be the world’s fifth largest global warming polluter, emitting more than all sources in Great Britain combined; and

Whereas, Carbon dioxide accounts for about eighty-one percent of the greenhouse gases released in the United States, with twenty percent of our nation’s carbon dioxide pollution emitted into the air by cars, sport utility vehicles and other light trucks; and

Whereas, The control and reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases from motor vehicles are critical to slow the effects of global warming; and

Whereas, Environmental Defense has warned that an increase of sea-level rise due to global warming would also contribute

to the temporary flooding or permanent inundation of many of New York City's and the region's coastal areas and, according to a report by the Columbia Earth Institute for the United States Global Change Research Program, would threaten New York City's infrastructure; and

Whereas, It is clear that global warming may have a considerable, negative impact on New York State and on New York City, in particular; and

Whereas, The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has documented that over the last century, temperatures in Albany, New York have warmed by more than 1°F, and precipitation throughout the state has increased by up to 20% and it is projected that by the year 2100 temperatures in New York could increase about 4°F in winter and spring, and slightly more in summer and fall (with a range of 2-8°F); and

Whereas, According to Columbia University's Columbia Earth Institute, in the New York Metropolitan Region, the temperature has warmed nearly 2° F over the past 100 years; and

Whereas, Global climate change models have projected that warming in the region will range from 1.7-3.5° F in the 2020s, 2.6-6.5° F in the 2050s and 4.4-10.2° F by the 2080s; and

Whereas, Greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles, including carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, also greatly affect people's health -- through a direct effect on the body and through the results of global warming; and

Whereas, Motor vehicle emissions affect human health in various ways; and

Whereas, In an EPA article entitled "*Mobile Source Emissions - Past, Present, and Future: Carbon Monoxide*", the EPA reports that mobile sources "...are responsible for more than half of all nitrogen oxide emissions in the United States." Nitrogen oxides combine with volatile organic compounds, such as hydrocarbons, also emitted by motor vehicles, to form ground-level ozone, or smog, in the presence of heat and sunlight. A hotter climate would thus increase concentrations of smog, which could cause a variety of respiratory problems, including aggravated asthma, decreases in lung capacity and increased susceptibility to respiratory illnesses; and

Whereas, It has been documented that children with asthma have significantly higher levels of nitrous oxide in the air that they exhale and this fact is of particular concern to New York City residents, since the City suffers from the highest asthma rates in the country; and

Whereas, A warmer climate, caused in significant part by greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles, may also result in an increase in heat-related illnesses and deaths, in addition to the increased risk of mosquito-borne illnesses; and

Whereas, The elderly, who make up about twelve percent of the population of New York, are particularly vulnerable; and

Whereas, Increased temperatures may also result in a longer allergy season, in addition to increased fungal growth and pollen production, potentially exacerbating asthma and other respiratory conditions; and

Whereas, According to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), allergic diseases affect approximately seventeen percent of the United States population and cost the health care system \$18 billion per year; and

Whereas, Nearly 40 million people suffer from hay fever, resulting in almost four million lost days of work and school; and

Whereas, Asthma is a severe form of allergic disease, and from 1980 to 1994 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that the number of preschool-aged children with asthma increased as much as one hundred and sixty percent; and

Whereas, Since the Clean Air Act of 1970, air pollution across the United States has improved for many pollutants, but unhealthy levels persist; and

Whereas, According to the NRDC, ground-level ozone pollution is the most temperature- and weather-sensitive air pollutant, and improvements in ozone levels have slowed since the 1990s; and

Whereas, The NRDC has reported that more than 100 million United States citizens live in counties that are noncompliant with current EPA ozone standards, thereby making ozone pollution a persistent environmental health challenge; and

Whereas, According to the NRDC, climate change has the potential to alter expected improvement in ozone air quality (and possible allergenic pollen) over much of the United States, and significant health implications could follow; and

Whereas, Current federal emissions standards for motor vehicles are not adequate to address the public health and environmental concerns regarding global warming; and

Whereas, The Climate Stewardship Act will benefit both personal and environmental health while reducing our nation's dependency on foreign oil; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York strongly supports the passage of S. 139, the *Climate Stewardship Act*, in the United States Senate, which would provide for a program of scientific research on abrupt climate change and accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States by establishing a market-driven system of greenhouse gas tradable allowances that could be used interchangeably with passenger vehicle fuel economy standard credits.

RC 10-21-04  
LS # 1259