



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1013-A

Resolution calling upon the City of New York to make Earth Day 2016 a car-free day for private and all non-essential city vehicles

By Council Members Rodriguez, Constantinides, Chin, Menchaca, Lander, Van Bramer, Vallone and Kallos

Whereas, Earth Day is an internationally-recognized event that began in 1970 and is celebrated on April 22nd each year; and

Whereas, The central purpose of Earth Day is to raise awareness around the importance of protecting the environment; and

Whereas, New York City has a long history with this commemoration of our planet, as 45 years ago, for the inaugural event, Mayor John Lindsay shut down Fifth Avenue and made Central Park available for the celebration; and

Whereas, According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the planet is getting warmer as a result of anthropogenic climate change; and

Whereas, According to NASA, not only have the 10 warmest years ever taken place during the last 12 years, but Antarctica lost 36 cubic miles of ice between 2002 and 2005, and the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the oceans has increased by 2 billion tons each year; and

Whereas, New York has, over the last several years, taken concrete steps toward limiting its carbon footprint; and

Whereas, Specifically, according to the de Blasio Administration's "One New York" Plan, the City has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 19 percent since 2005, and according to the 2014 inventory of New York City Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the city reduced total energy consumption by 8 percent, and increased

biofuel usage in buildings by over 1,000 percent between 2002 and 2005; and

Whereas, The 2014 inventory of New York City Greenhouse Gas Emissions stated that, in 2013, the city emitted 11.4 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, 24 percent of which, or 2.8 million tons, came from the city's 2 million vehicles; and

Whereas, The 2014 inventory of New York City Greenhouse Gas Emissions also noted that Mayor de Blasio committed to reducing the City's greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050 and 35 percent by 2025; and

Whereas, New York City has a major leadership role on issues of importance both nationally and worldwide, with a population larger than that of 38 states and a gross domestic product equivalent to that of South Korea, so City government should take the lead on car-free Earth Day by encouraging New Yorkers to use alternate forms of transportation, other than their own personal vehicles, on that day; and

Whereas, According to the Guardian, Paris, another major global city, saw its nitrogen dioxide levels plummet by as much as 40 percent in parts of the city during its recent vehicle-free day on September 27th; and

Whereas, Oslo, Milan, Dublin, Madrid, and Brussels have all announced, since the beginning of 2014, plans to convert parts of their respective city centers into car-free zones; and

Whereas, Based on data from the 2014 inventory of New York City Greenhouse Gas Emissions, vehicles account for 24 percent of the 48 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent that are emitted each year, which is 11.5 million tons per year, or 31,000 tons per day; and

Whereas, Based on the above figures, declaring Earth Day 2016 a car-free day - with the exception of essential vehicles - could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by about 30,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, and would send a strong message nationally and worldwide that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is of the utmost importance; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the City of New York to make Earth Day 2016 a car-free day for private and all non-essential city vehicles.

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MK/jm