



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1245

Resolution calling on the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign bill S.3074, the Climate Change Education Act

By Council Members Constantinides, Palma, Richards, Rosenthal and Chin

Whereas, The consensus among the overwhelming majority of scientists, internationally, is that climate change is occurring at a rapid rate and the current trend of warming in Earth's climate system is unprecedented; and

Whereas, The increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere is a main cause of climate change; and

Whereas, The principal human activity contributing to climate change and global warming is the emission of greenhouse gases by burning fossil fuels for power; and

Whereas, According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the future rate and magnitude of climate change will depend on the rate at which greenhouse gas concentrations in Earth's atmosphere continue to increase; and

Whereas, Climate change is impacting New York City's public health, critical infrastructure, communities, vulnerable populations, natural systems, buildings and economy, and these impacts will worsen in the future; and

Whereas, Impacts that are anticipated by experts such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the National Academy of Sciences, the EPA, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, and the New York City Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability include severe weather such as droughts and hurricanes, human health impacts, environmental justice impacts, economic

impacts, damage to infrastructure, sea level rise, changes to coastlines and coastal wetlands, disruption of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity; and

Whereas, In order to mitigate the extent and impacts of climate change, local, national and global societies must change their economic and social behaviors, and in order to change behaviors societies must be informed about and educated on the connection between human activities and climate change, possible consequences and potential solutions; and

Whereas, According to a 2014 study by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason Center for Climate Change Communication only 63% of Americans believe global warming is happening; 35% believe global warming is caused mostly by natural phenomena rather than human activities; 48% are not worried about global warming; 57% believe global warming is not currently harming people in the United States and it will not for at least 25 years, if ever; and 26% believe global warming will cause little or no harm to future generations; and

Whereas, The National Center for Science Education has stated that the science of climate change should be taught in formal and informal educational settings in order to inform future citizens to make science-based decisions on the causes, effects and solutions to climate change; and

Whereas, In 2013, a consortium of 26 states, the National Science Teachers Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Research Council and Achieve released the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which are new guidelines for what the science content in educational curricula for students in grades kindergarten through 12 should include, and these guidelines include climate change education beginning in middle school; and

Whereas, So far 16 states have adopted the NGSS, but New York is not one of them; and

Whereas, In New York, the State Education Department (SED) is responsible for setting standards for what all students should know and be able to do as a result of skilled instruction, and in 2016, the Council adopted Resolution 375 calling upon the SED to include lessons on climate change in curricula for students in

grades kindergarten through 12; and

Whereas, Bill S.3074 sponsored by Senator Edward Markey, the Climate Change Education Act, has been introduced in the United States Senate and, if enacted into law, it would declare that the evidence for human-induced climate change is overwhelming and undeniable, and would require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to establish a Climate Change Education Program to broaden the understanding of human-induced climate change, possible consequences, and potential solutions; apply the latest scientific and technological discoveries to provide learning opportunities to people of all ages; conduct a national information campaign to educate people and promote implementation of new technologies, programs, and incentives related to energy conservation, renewable energy, and greenhouse gas reduction; and inform the public of climate change's impacts on human health and safety; and

Whereas, The Climate Change Education Act would also require NOAA to establish a grant program for climate change education; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign bill S.3074, the Climate Change Education Act.

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