



CONSENT CALENDAR

March 9, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Terry Taplin (Author), Councilmember Rigel Robinson, Councilmember Ben Bartlett, and Mayor Jesse Arreguín (Co-Sponsors)

Subject: Support for SB 260

RECOMMENDATION

Send a letter of endorsement for SB 260, the Climate Corporate Accountability Act, to Senator Scott Wiener and the Senate Standing Committee on Environmental Quality, and urge the CA Senate to lead the nation in pursuing real emissions reductions and holding corporations accountable.

BACKGROUND

As Californians, we are no strangers to climate disaster. In recent years, California has suffered from record-breaking drought, loss of snowpack, rising sea levels, and extreme temperature fluctuation. Just in the past year, we saw five of our largest wildfires on record, and we can only expect these patterns to worsen.

The science behind climate change is clear – excessive pollution of greenhouse gases (GHG) is burning our atmosphere and destroying our planet. It is clear to many of us that corporations are largely responsible for this pollution, but we do not have the hard numbers to prove this. Based on estimates, we know that 100 corporations have been responsible for roughly 71% of all GHG emissions since 1998, but without knowing which corporations, how much they pollute, and whether they are increasing or decreasing pollution, we are unable to properly regulate, reduce, and restrict the emissions that are killing our planet.

SB 260 aims to solve this problem. SB 260 will require corporations doing business in California to report all of their emissions – including emissions produced all the way down their supply chain. Corporations often promise to publicize and decrease their emissions, but rarely follow through. As the first bill of its kind nationally, SB 260 will establish a right for the public to know who is polluting our communal environment, and if they are working to decrease their emissions. As residents of a state that is often at

the epicenter of climate change catastrophe, we have a responsibility to take a bold stand in holding these perpetrators accountable.

CONTACT

Terry Taplin, Councilmember, District 2, (510) 981-7120

ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter

The Honorable Scott Wiener  
Senator, District 11  
State Capitol, Room 5100  
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

**Re: SB 260 (Wiener) - The Climate Corporate Accountability Act - SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Wiener,

The Berkeley City Council expresses its support for Senate Bill 260, the Climate Corporate Accountability Act, which will require all US-based businesses with over \$1 billion in gross annual revenue, who do business in California, to report their greenhouse gas emissions and set science-based emissions reduction targets in coordination with the Air Resources Board.

Climate catastrophes are already beginning to ravage landscapes across the globe and California is no different. In 2020 alone, California saw five of its twenty largest wildfires on record and this trend is only projected to get worse. Further, while wildfires have certainly been the face of California's climate struggles, the state is no stranger to drought and loss of snowpack, sea level rise, diminishing agricultural return in certain areas, and innumerable other impacts that often compound on one another. All of this is due to excessive pollution of greenhouse gases (GHG) into our atmosphere. What may be worse still – we know many of the common culprits of this pollution are corporations, but we simply don't have the data available to prove this or force change. Generally speaking, we know 100 corporations have been responsible for roughly 71% of all GHG emissions since 1998, but without knowing which corporations, how much they pollute, and whether they are increasing or decreasing pollution, we are unable to properly regulate, reduce, and restrict the emissions that are killing our planet.

SB 260 solves this issue by requiring reporting of not only direct emissions from these corporations, but any emissions produced from their supply chain as well. This level of transparency is not only a national first, but establishes a right for the public to know who is polluting our communal environment, how much, and if they are decreasing their emissions – something that is often promised by corporations but rarely verified.

The Council of the City of Berkeley strongly supports SB 260 and hopes that the Environmental Quality Committee and Legislature at large will take the opportunity to lead the nation in corporate emissions accountability. This bill is a crucial step to pursuing real emissions reductions and ensuring corporations cannot get away with greenwashing while they profit off of the destruction of our planet.

Sincerely,

The Council of the City of Berkeley

CC: Standing Committee on Environmental Quality

Senator Nancy Skinner

Assemblymember Buffy Wicks

Assemblymember David Chiu

Assemblymember Phil Ting

Assemblymember Rob Bonta