

RESOLUTION NO. 70,414-N.S.

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A PILOT EXISTING BUILDING ELECTRIFICATION
INSTALLATION INCENTIVES AND JUST TRANSITION PILOT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the world is facing a grave climate emergency, requiring municipalities to rapidly and justly transition towards a zero-carbon economy by 2030; and

WHEREAS, transitioning Berkeley's economy will require significant investment on the part of both government and residents as converting Berkeley's approximately 46,000 residential housing units will likely cost hundreds of millions of dollars; and

WHEREAS, low-carbon technology and infrastructure can often be out of reach for many households and, without direct assistance, many will be left behind; and

WHEREAS, moderate and lower-income communities are most impacted by global climate change and have the least financial ability to address it; and

WHEREAS, the City's Draft Existing Building Electrification Strategy cites the importance of ensuring equity in access to carbon-free technology; and

WHEREAS, by partnering with labor, the City of Berkeley can cost-effectively meet its goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions while supporting elements of a just transition ensuring that people who live and work in Berkeley—especially those from historically disadvantaged populations—have access to high-road, family-sustaining careers in union construction associated with existing building electrification; and

WHEREAS, the program would help support Pipefitters and other tradespeople who may be acutely impacted by Berkeley's building electrification policies; and

WHEREAS, direct install programs using pre-qualified contractors meeting quality and labor standards eliminate the need for households to find and manage their own contractors, and therefore can achieve significant cost savings and socioeconomic benefits; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to establish a two-year Existing Building Electrification Direct Install and Just Transition Incentive Program to assist residents with transitioning from a carbon-based city; and

WHEREAS, in adopting this building electrification Pilot Program, the City of Berkeley simultaneously supports local and statewide electrification at an emergency pace (2030) and continued safe, affordable, and reliable natural gas service for Berkeley and California customers who remain on gas service in the interim; and

WHEREAS, despite offering opportunities for certain trades, absent state leadership and a statewide just transition framework, electrification can adversely impact the livelihoods of gas utility infrastructure and extraction workers and low-income gas customers; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley urges the State of California, through the California Public Utilities Commission and the California Energy Commission, to adopt a statewide approach to contract the natural gas distribution system in safe and economical way that provides a just transition for gas utility and extraction workers.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager establish an Existing Building Electrification Installation Incentives and Just Transition Program to invest in zero-carbon plumbing, HVAC, cooking, and related electrical system retrofits as follows, to be further defined by staff:

1. a preference first for assisting existing affordable housing buildings and assisting households at or below 120% of the Area Median Income such as:
 - a. transferees of residential property to include appliance retrofits and electrical upgrades as appropriate;
 - b. existing residential property owners and renters, especially tenants in income-restricted units, pursuing electrification retrofits or replacing broken or outdated appliances, to include electrical upgrades as appropriate.

2. a nexus with high-road jobs, including:
 - a. use of pre-qualified residential construction contractors to reliably perform high-quality work and provide high-road careers that meet minimum labor standards;
 - b. leveraging other local, regional, state or federal climate or energy efficiency incentives, such as building efficiency, to maximize climate benefits and to include other crafts, including but not limited to Sheet Metal, Electricians, Carpenters, Plumbers and Pipefitters;
 - c. linking Berkeley residents who are disadvantaged or disproportionately impacted by climate and environmental injustices to training programs (including apprenticeships) that prepare them to enter and succeed in union construction careers by working with local Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) workforce partners, school districts/community colleges and CBOs to develop and sustain a long-term pipeline of work in the residential building retrofit market with high-road labor standards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Berkeley Energy Commission, or successor, and the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Policy Committee, in consultation with community groups, provide input to staff and Council on at least an annual basis about eligible categories of fund expenditures to maximize equitable emissions reductions and impacts for eligible households.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any unexpended funds shall carry over from year to year consistent with the biannual budget process.

BE IT FURTHER AND FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution and letters will be sent to members of the California Public Utilities and Energy Commissions, Governor Newsom, State Senator Skinner, and Assemblymember Wicks.

The foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Berkeley City Council on June 14, 2022 by the following vote:

Ayes: Bartlett, Droste, Hahn, Harrison, Kesarwani, Robinson, Taplin, Wengraf, and Arreguin.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.



Kate Harrison, Mayor Pro Tempore

Attest: 

Rose Thomsen, Deputy City Clerk