

# Climate Action for Ann Arbor: Activist Kit

## *Tell City Council - No Backsliding on Climate!*

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### SUMMARY

Under the Trump Administration, cities and states are leading the fight against the climate crisis. Across the United States, local governments, representing nearly half of the country's population, have committed themselves to bold climate action and to upholding the principles of the Paris climate accord.

The City of Ann Arbor has been one of the leaders of this fight since well before the current Administration:

- In the 1990s and 2000s, Ann Arbor developed some of the country's foremost clean energy initiatives for municipal facilities.
- In 2012, Ann Arbor became one of the country's first communities to adopt a community climate action plan, committing to a 90% reduction in climate emissions by 2025.
- In 2017, Ann Arbor adopted a resolution to uphold the principles of the Paris climate treaty.
- In 2017, Ann Arbor committed itself to a 100% Renewables policy, so that all municipal operations would be powered by renewable energy by 2030.
- In 2017, Ann Arbor established an 8-year \$880,000/year funding source for climate action, monies from which are first becoming available later in 2019.

But now, at least one member of the Ann Arbor City Council wants to reconsider the climate funding commitment. On March 4, Councilperson Jane Lumm introduced a resolution to do just that, but temporarily withdrew it in the face of community opposition. She vowed to bring back her resolution on April 1, and other Council members have also raised objections to climate action funding, to the current funding

mechanism, and to the City's climate action workplan. We hope to retain the City's climate action commitment, but the debate over climate funding will continue until the conclusion of the City's budget process on May 20.

Now is the time for people who care about climate change to raise our voices, and persuade city leaders that **climate impacts everything**, and that there is a **broad and deep political will for climate funding in our community**.

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### ISSUE UPDATE:

Eighteen months ago, the City of Ann Arbor created its first significant source of funding for climate action – to finally make good on the City's visionary 2012 climate action plan, and on its 2017 declaration that Ann Arbor was “still in” on the goals of the Paris climate treaty.

Unfortunately, the City Council is now re-considering. Some community activists have lobbied the new Council majority to re-purpose the climate funds for other projects, and one Councilperson has proposed a measure to unwind the City's climate funding commitment. It is currently unclear where a majority of the Ann Arbor City Council stands on the issue.

Here are the details:

In 2017, the City resolved to allocate its \$2.2 million annual County public safety rebate to climate action (40%), affordable housing (40%), and pedestrian safety (20%). Those funds are first becoming available later this year, and they're projected to generate \$880,000 per year for climate action – the first significant and sustained source of funds ever allocated to the City's climate action plan. (To date, the City has never devoted more than 0.2% of its total budget to climate action.)

The City Administrator's proposed budget would spend the \$880,000 on the following important climate programs, all of which are based on successful programs in other communities, and all of which have clear and measurable goals:

- Net Zero Energy Affordable Housing Program
- Green Rental Program
- Aging in Place Efficiently Program
- Development of Time of Marketing Policy
- Resilience Hubs
- 100% Municipal Clean and Renewable Energy Strategy
- Revolving Energy Fund

- Efficiency and Solar in the Community
- Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
- Sustaining Ann Arbor Together Neighborhood Grant Program

But now that there's real money on the table, City Council is having second thoughts. In response, Mayor Christopher Taylor and Councilperson Kathy Griswold are sponsoring a resolution to change the funding mechanism but retain the City's budget commitment to climate action. We're hoping this resolution can build a Council consensus behind significant, long-term, additive climate funding. Unfortunately, another Councilperson has pledged to bring an alternative resolution to undo the City's climate commitment.

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#### KEY DATES:

The next four city council meetings are scheduled for:

1. April 1 - Consideration of Taylor/Griswold Climate Funding Resolution (and alternative anti-climate resolution)
  2. April 15 - Presentation of the City Administrator's Proposed FY 2020/21 Budget
  3. May 6 - Budget Public Hearing
  4. May 20 - Final Vote on City Budget
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#### CORE MESSAGES & TALKING POINTS

- Backsliding on climate action is absolutely unacceptable.
  - Every prominent climate scientist is telling us we need to act as quickly as possible to avoid worst-case climate disasters.
  - Ann Arbor had not been moving fast enough to adequately address the climate crisis because it hadn't provided sufficient funding – until the 2017 designation of the county rebate for this purpose.
  - The establishment of that fund is the single most important thing the City of Ann Arbor has done to address climate action.
  - **We do not object to separating the City's climate funding from the County rebate as long as the City provides an alternative source of long-term, significant, and additive funding.**
  - Tell City Council to fully fund its climate action work. No backsliding.
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## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

The [City Council website](#) contains a lot of information about city council. Please send an email to all city council members by emailing [citycouncil@a2gov.org](mailto:citycouncil@a2gov.org). However, it is most effective to reach out to the council member that represents your ward. You can [find out what ward you live in here](#) -- type your street address in the search bar at the top of the page. Council emails are listed below:

Mayor Christopher Taylor - [ctaylor@a2gov.org](mailto:ctaylor@a2gov.org)  
Anne Bannister - [abannister@a2gov.org](mailto:abannister@a2gov.org) - (Ward 1)  
Jeff Hayner - [jhayner@a2gov.org](mailto:jhayner@a2gov.org) - (Ward 1)  
Jane Lumm - [jlumm@a2gov.org](mailto:jlumm@a2gov.org) - (Ward 2)  
Kathy Griswold - [kgriswold@a2gov.org](mailto:kgriswold@a2gov.org) - (Ward 2)  
Julie Grand - [jgrand@a2gov.org](mailto:jgrand@a2gov.org) - (Ward 3)  
Zachary Ackerman - [zackerman@a2gov.org](mailto:zackerman@a2gov.org) - (Ward 3)  
Jack Eaton - [jeaton@a2gov.org](mailto:jeaton@a2gov.org) - (Ward 4)  
Elizabeth Nelson - [enelson@a2gov.org](mailto:enelson@a2gov.org) - (Ward 4)  
Chip Smith - [csmith@a2gov.org](mailto:csmith@a2gov.org) - (Ward 5)  
Ali Ramlawi - [aramlawi@a2gov.org](mailto:aramlawi@a2gov.org) - (Ward 5)

### Coffee Hours

- Several councilpersons hold open meetings with constituents. The following officials have set regular availability times:
- Jack Eaton - 1st and 3rd Mondays, 8:00-9:30am, Roos Roast, 1155 Rosewood
- Elizabeth Nelson - Sundays before 1st and 3rd Mondays, 3:00-4:30pm, Roos Roast, 1155 Rosewood

### Council Caucus

- Sunday nights before Council Meetings, 7:00-9:00 PM, City Hall 2nd Floor 301 E Huron St
- Agenda: Public comment general time. Three minutes, no need to signup in advance, speakers will be assigned in the order of arrival.

### City Council Meetings

- 1st and 3rd Mondays, 7:00pm, City Hall, Fifth and Huron Streets. (Working sessions are often held on other Mondays.) 2nd Floor Council Chambers. Meetings are open to the public. All regular meetings have a Public Comments

period. To speak during Public Comments, you must sign up in advance. See below for more information.

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## **BACKGROUND ARTICLES, SUMMARIES & RESOURCES**

### **[City of Ann Arbor Climate Action web page](#)**

[Ann Arbor mayor proposes new plan to 'untie the 40-40-20 knot' - MLive](#)  
March 20, 2019

[Ann Arbor council votes 8-3 on how it'd use millions in new tax money - mlive.com](#)  
July 4, 2017

[City Council debates use of potential millage funds | The Michigan Daily](#)  
July 4, 2017

[Washtenaw County Sends Controversial Millage Proposal to November Ballot | The Sun Times News](#)  
July 19, 2017

[I Will Vote Yes, I Hope You Will Too](#) (8, 429 people reached)  
October 26, 2017

[Washtenaw County Voters To Decide Community Mental Health And Public Safety Proposal On Nov. 7th | WEMU](#)  
November 2, 2017

[Mental Health Millage to Fund Ann Arbor Climate Action - Michigan Climate Action Network](#)  
November 3, 2017

[Washtenaw Dems Endorse Mental Health and Safety Tax | MLive](#)  
November 3, 2017

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## SAMPLE EMAIL MESSAGE TO CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Please vote YES for climate action

Dear Mayor Taylor and City Council,

Climate change is the most important issue of our time, and we owe it to future generations to do everything we can to address it.

I'm proud that Ann Arbor has been taking bold action to address the climate crisis – through its Climate Action Plan, 100% Renewable Energy Commitment, new Office of Sustainability, and the funding created through the 2017 County millage rebate.

I understand that some City residents do not support using the County rebate for climate action (or for affordable housing and pedestrian safety), but that should not stop us from taking action on these important City priorities. Please vote YES on the resolution, sponsored by Mayor Taylor and Councilmember Griswold, to retain the funding while changing the funding mechanism.

Defunding climate action in Ann Arbor would be a terrible step backward for our community. Please vote YES on the new resolution. No matter what other issues divide the Ann Arbor City Council, our community should be united in fighting climate change!

Sincerely,

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## HOW TO COMMENT AT CITY COUNCIL

1. SIGN UP AT 8AM the morning of the meeting by call the City Clerk at 734.794.6140. It's important to call right at 8:00 and to keep trying until you get through. It is limited to the ten speakers and they may fill up quickly. You need to tell them that you'd like to speak about an agenda item -- City climate funding.
  2. GET YOUR COMMENTS READY: SAMPLE COMMENTS:  
The speaking time limit is 3 minutes, and it is strictly enforced. It's very helpful to practice your comments beforehand so you can keep within the 3 minutes.
  3. Speakers and attendees are all asked to wear a **green color shirt** to show our shared support for climate funding.
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## ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations support long-term, significant, and additive climate funding in the City of Ann Arbor:

Ann Arbor Area Elders Climate Action  
Ann Arbor 2030 District  
Climate Reality Project, UM Chapter  
Citizens Climate Lobby, Washtenaw Chapter  
Ecology Center  
Huron River Watershed Council  
Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice, Climate Task Force  
National Wildlife Federation, Great Lakes Office  
Michigan Interfaith Power & Light  
Michigan League of Conservation Voters  
Sierra Club, Huron Valley Group  
The Climate Mobilization, Ann Arbor Chapter  
UM Climate Action Movement  
Washtenaw Bicycling & Walking Coalition  
Wolfpack, Energy Hunt Team