

Baltimore City Council Climate Agenda

Introduction

The climate crisis poses significant risks to Baltimore's communities, waterways, and environment. The City Council is considering a package of bills to help mitigate the worst effects of climate change and move the City toward a more sustainable future.

How is Baltimore affected by climate change?

Climate change poses a multitude of challenges for Baltimore, from the urban heat island effect to sea level rise. And the effects of climate change are not felt equally – Black and brown communities are more vulnerable to climate impacts than white communities.

It's getting hotter. In 2021, Baltimore experienced over 50 days with temperatures above 90 degrees.¹ By 2080, Baltimore's climate is projected to resemble that of steamy Mississippi.² The vast expanses of concrete and paved surfaces in Baltimore concentrate heat more than in surrounding areas due to the urban heat island effect. Formerly redlined neighborhoods have the least amount of trees and green space and are therefore the hottest neighborhoods in Baltimore. For example, Broadway East has six times less tree canopy than Roland Park, which can lead to significant temperature differences between the two neighborhoods.³

It's getting wetter. Precipitation in Maryland has increased by 2.63 inches per decade since 2000.⁴ Heavy rains have already caused devastating flooding in the city, including the 2018 Frederick Ave corridor flood that damaged 200-plus homes in the Beechfield neighborhood.⁵ Wet weather also leads to thousands of sewage backups into residents' homes every year that put Baltimoreans' health, homes, and financial security at risk.⁶



What would the City Council's climate package do?

- **Global Warming Solutions - Carbon Neutral City** ([Resolution 21-0075R](#))
 - This resolution calls on Baltimore City to become carbon-neutral by 2050. Though it is non-binding, it will help spur conversations about the challenges and opportunities associated with moving Baltimore to net zero by 2050.
- **City Operations - Net-Zero Emissions of Greenhouse Gases** ([Ordinance 21-0161](#))
 - Requires City government operations to be net-zero by 2050. It will codify some of the goals outlined in 21-0075R and ensure that City operations set an example of how to move toward net zero emissions.
- **Procurement - Zero-Emission Vehicles** ([Ordinance 21-0159](#))
 - Requires half of the City's fleet of vehicles to be zero-emission (plug-in hybrids and battery electric cars) by 2030 and the rest of the fleet to be zero-emission by 2040. This ordinance will bring the City in line with Maryland's plan to have a fully electric state fleet by 2040.
- **Building Code - Cool Roofs** ([Ordinance 21-0160](#))
 - Requires reflective, solar, or green roofs on new buildings and additions to existing buildings. This ordinance will help reduce the urban heat island effect.

Take Action!

- **Submit testimony!** Tell the City Council how climate change impacts you and what you think the City should do about it. You can testify virtually during the hearings on these bills or submit written testimony ahead of time. You can upload testimony [here](#) or via email (testimony@baltimorecity.gov) up to 24 hours before a hearing's scheduled start time. Here is the hearing schedule for these four climate bills:
 - **January 11th, 2022** at 10am: *Procurement - Zero-Emission Vehicles (21-0159)* in the Ways and Means Committee. Join online [here](#).
 - **January 13th, 2022** at 2pm: *Building Code - Cool Roofs (21-0160)* in the Rules and Legislative Oversight Committee. Join online [here](#).
 - **January 19th, 2022** at 10am: *Global Warming Solutions - Carbon Neutral City (21-0075R)* in the Health, Environment, and Technology Committee. Join online [here](#).
 - TBD: *City Operations - Net-Zero Emissions of Greenhouse Gases (21-0161)* in the Health, Environment, and Technology Committee

References

1. Linh Bui. (2021). [What Could Climate Change Mean For Baltimore And Maryland?](#) CBS Baltimore.
2. Appalachian Laboratory. (2019). [Climate Of North American Cities Will Shift Hundreds Of Miles In One Generation](#). University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.
3. Roxanne Ready, et al. (2019). [No trees, no shade, no relief as climate heats up](#). Capital News Service.
4. Devon Milley & Clara Niel. (2021). [Maryland is seeing an increase in precipitation, sea level and flooding](#). Capital Gazette.
5. Ron Cassie. (2019). [Hell and High Water](#). Baltimore Magazine.
6. Kyle Bagenstose & Kevin Crowe. (2021). [Climate change brings a perfect storm of raw sewage and rainfall in cities that can least afford it](#). USA Today.