

Committee on the Environment
November 29, 2018

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, November 29, 2018
1:47 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN - CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS - VICE CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN AL TAUBENBERGER

BILLS: 170712

RESOLUTIONS: 180706

1 - - -

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: The
3 hearing on the Committee on the Environment is
4 hereby called to order. And we will ask the
5 clerk to please read the title of the bill.

6 THE CLERK: Amending Title 21 of The
7 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Miscellaneous," by
8 adding a new Chapter 21-3000, entitled
9 "Environmental Justice Reporting," to establish
10 standards for studying and reporting on
11 environmental justice, under certain terms and
12 conditions.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.
14 We want to say thank you to everyone for
15 showing up and being here. We need to lean on
16 you to please honor the time of two minutes. We
17 know all of us can talk for several hours on
18 this topic. However, we have a number of
19 witnesses and Councilmembers will be in and out
20 throughout the next couple of hours. We must
21 finish at 4:15.

22 So, I'm asking everyone to, please,
23 honor the clock and honor what was in your email
24 to please hold your testimony to two minutes so
25 that we can allows members on this team, on this

1 Committee to take care of other business that is
2 as demanding.

3 Pleased to have members of the Committee
4 in Councilman Al Taubenbeger, Councilwoman Helen
5 Gym, Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell. So with
6 that, we want to call -- the Chair is going
7 to -- we are going to first here testimony first
8 on the bill. And then we are going to move --
9 going to close the meeting, close the hearing,
10 go into a meeting to take action on the bill
11 today. And then we will go back into a hearing
12 to hear testimony on the resolution. But it's
13 imperative that we first take care of this bill,
14 Bill No. 170712.

15 So with that, we want to call up
16 Christine Knapp, the Office of Sustainability.
17 And clerk, you did read the title of the bill,
18 correct?

19 THE CLERK: Yes.

20 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay. So
22 right at this moment, we are speaking purely on
23 Bill No. 170712, okay?

24 Thank you.

25 MS. KNAPP: Thank you.

1 Good afternoon, Chairwoman Reynolds
2 Brown and Members of the Committee. I'm
3 Christine Knapp. I'm the Director of the Office
4 of Sustainability testifying on Bill 170712.
5 Thank you, Councilwoman Reynolds Brown for your
6 leadership on this bill and for helping us get
7 that Power Purchase Agreement passed earlier in
8 session.

9 The Office of Sustainability is
10 responsible for implementing Greenworks, the
11 City's sustainability framework which includes
12 visions around food and drinking water, air
13 quality energy, climate change, natural
14 resources, transportation, waste and sustainable
15 education, stewardship and economic
16 opportunities. The goal of the Kenney
17 Administration is to ensure that every
18 Philadelphian, no matter what ZIP code they live
19 in, is able to thrive and succeed.
20 Sustainability is a key part in ensuring every
21 resident is healthy, lives in a quality
22 neighborhood and has the opportunity to prosper.

23 Sustainability is about more than the
24 environment. It is also about tackling issues
25 such as unemployment, health and neighborhood

1 equity. In a City where 26 percent of our
2 residents live in poverty and one in four
3 residents doesn't know where their next meal
4 will come from, we need to continue to
5 prioritize sustainability for its other many
6 benefits. Becoming a cleaner, greener City will
7 reduce the number of children who suffer asthma
8 attacks, lower energy costs, increase access to
9 healthy food, prevent basement flooding and
10 create job opportunities in a clean economy.

11 Philadelphia made's a lot of progress in
12 the last decade in advancing sustainability
13 programs. However, we know that not all
14 neighborhoods in Philadelphia have equally
15 benefited from this work. One of our goals over
16 the last few years has been to prioritize our
17 work in neighborhoods that will make the most
18 difference.

19 For example, we've been working in the
20 last six months in Hunting Park on a Beat the
21 Heat pilot to address the disproportionately high
22 heat experienced in that community and
23 understand how the City and other partners can
24 help residents thrive during high heat.

25 Communities like Hunting Park are most

1 vulnerable to climate change. And yet the
2 voices of these residents are often -- too often
3 not heard during decision-making processes.
4 That's why we support strides to restore
5 communities confronting disproportionately high
6 environmental threats. The final restoration
7 efforts be rooted in the experience and
8 expertise of these communities. The guidance of
9 this commission will be indispensable to
10 defining neighborhoods with adverse human health
11 or environmental effects. Identifying data
12 helpful to understanding environmental justice
13 concerns, reviewing existing City programs,
14 policies, activities and processes that may
15 impact environmental justice concerns. And
16 addressing barriers to meaningful participation
17 in decision making affecting residents of
18 environmental justice areas.

19 I am happy to provide my support for
20 Bill No. 170712, and be happy to answer any
21 questions you may have.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you
23 very, very, very much Christine for all the work
24 you do every day in this space.

25 MS. KNAPP: Thank you.

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Before we
2 move to questions, we want to invite -- you stay
3 where you are. We want to invite up Allison
4 Acevedo and Jerome Shabazz. Allison Acevedo is
5 with Pennsylvania Department of Environmental
6 Protection. And Jerome Shabazz does a lot of
7 great work in the 4th Councilmanic District. Is
8 with Overbrook Environmental Education Center.

9 Please provide -- state your name and
10 provide testimony on Bill No. 170712.

11 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

12 MS. ACEVEDO: My name is Allison
13 Acevedo. Good afternoon, Councilwoman Reynolds
14 Brown. Good afternoon other Councilmembers.

15 I am as Councilwoman Reynolds Brown
16 mentioned, the Director of the Office of
17 Environmental Justice for the Department of
18 Environmental Protection in Pennsylvania. So,
19 the Office of Environmental Justice was
20 established in 2002 as a result of
21 community-based efforts in advocacy initiatives
22 statewide that addressed environmental injustice
23 called upon -- and called upon active state
24 participation by residents of communities that
25 historically faced barriers to establishing

1 policy making and implementation initiatives at
2 DEP.

3 So, this office has three objectives:
4 Improve environmental impacts, empower
5 communities and advance economic development in
6 environmental justice areas. So, DEP defines
7 environmental justice areas as those areas that
8 are 30 percent people of color and/or 20 percent
9 low income. So, our purview -- and the reason
10 that we exist is to support communities that are
11 in environmental justice areas.

12 So, we also have an Environmental
13 Justice Advisory Board. Jerome Shabazz here
14 today is one of our members of this board. And
15 that Board provides additional tools to support
16 and advance environmental injustice and --
17 environmentalist justice and work against
18 environmental injustice in Pennsylvania. The
19 stakeholders who are involved in the EJAB
20 provide guidance to DEP around rules,
21 regulations and policies that address
22 environmental inequities and support
23 environmental justice communities.

24 Also critical to the environmental
25 justice work is the State's Environmental Rights

1 Amendment. Article 1, Section 27 of our state
2 constitution gives all Pennsylvanians the right
3 to clean air, pure water and preservation of
4 natural environment and mandates that the state
5 protect and -- protect and is trustee of our
6 public resources. So, the Environmental Rights
7 Amendment provides specific guidance and
8 motivation for our office to do the work that we
9 do.

10 So, we just wanted to really come here
11 today to show you that we are partner in working
12 with the City of Philadelphia. We have tools in
13 addition to the EJAB. We're engaged in the
14 community in a way that we are supporting
15 environmental education. We have environmental
16 mapping tools, the EJ Viewer, which really helps
17 to determine where environmental justice areas
18 are, and what our permit practices are in
19 environmental justice areas in Philadelphia and
20 across the state.

21 And then, we also have representatives
22 throughout the state. We have a eastern
23 district coordinator of environmental justice
24 that is a direct contact to folks here in
25 Philadelphia. So, we have a new coordinator

1 starting at that position. It's been vacant for
2 a while.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Oh, good.

4 MS. ACEVEDO: We have new coordinator in
5 eastern region starting in December to really
6 support any efforts through this office and to
7 really support efforts of environmental justice.

8 But we just want to show our partnership
9 with the City of Philadelphia. And we look
10 forward to working with the City to support
11 progress that the Office of Sustainability and
12 other areas of government have made toward
13 sustainability goals and reducing environmental
14 impacts on communities. Our office seeks to
15 learn from and offer DEP resources to
16 Philadelphia. And I'm, personally, always
17 available by phone or email to support any
18 efforts here in Philadelphia. And again, our
19 new staff person is, as well.

20 So, we particularly look forward to our
21 continued partnership with the City as the City
22 develops legislation, data and resources and
23 public engagement opportunities around
24 environmental justice an environmental
25 disparities.

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you
2 for your testimony and congratulations.

3 MS. ACEVEDO: Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Good
5 afternoon, Jerome Shabazz.

6 MR. SHABAZZ: Good afternoon,
7 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown and the
8 rest of the Councilmembers. Thank you very
9 much.

10 My name is Jerome Shabazz. I'm the
11 Executive Director of the Overbrook
12 Environmental Education Center. And last year I
13 had the privilege of being nominated to sit on
14 the Citizens Advisory Council by the Governor,
15 as well as I sit on the State's Environmental
16 Justice Council and the National Environment
17 Justice Advisory Board. So, we get a chance to
18 see a lot of concerns not only in the
19 Commonwealth but around the United States.

20 And when we look at environmental
21 justice issues, we see that the issues are
22 different depending on the geography of where
23 people are. However, the end result is
24 generally the same as that. It's of impacting
25 people who are a poor, minority folks who are

1 disenfranchised and do not have a great deal f
2 representation. And the big part of my
3 testimony today is to support our efforts to
4 pull together a environmental justice commission
5 here in the City, so we can have greater tools
6 and resources to assess how to best serve the
7 people who are most vulnerable in these regards.

8 When I work on the EJAB we have some
9 guiding principles. And they are to be
10 proactive in our environmental justice issues
11 relative to the state, to eliminate any existing
12 environmental disparities, particularly minority
13 and low income communities, to encourage,
14 educate and empower minority and low income
15 communities, to become active participants and
16 to permit legislative process, to ensure
17 equitable enforcement of regulations and
18 statutes, and most importantly, to enhance the
19 research and assessment approaches of how
20 communities themselves can stay healthy and
21 vibrant and protect themselves against
22 environmental disparities.

23 So again, we support the efforts to
24 establish a commission around this environmental
25 justice concerns. We want the tools to be able

1 to line up with what is happening in the state
2 as well as our ability to connect with even
3 national goals. And we want to make sure that
4 we create the social architecture that enables
5 it to become the new normal for communities to
6 be able to help themselves relative to
7 environmental disparities.

8 So, thank you so much for the brief
9 moment to speak to you today.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I thank
11 you all for your testimony and for your choice
12 to be in this space, because it really is the
13 future.

14 Any questions from members of the
15 Committee?

16 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Yes.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Please,
18 Councilman Al Taubenbeger.

19 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank you very
20 much, Madam Chair.

21 Mr. Shabazz, you're the Executive
22 Director of JAS Tech?

23 MR. SHABAZZ: Yes.

24 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And what is
25 that?

1 MR. SHABAZZ: JAS^Tech is a non-for
2 profit organization. It's an acronym actually.
3 It stands for Juveniles Active in Science and
4 Technology.

5 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Okay. Very
6 good. I mean, I think sometimes I might propose
7 a bill against an acronym because not everyone
8 understands them or knows them. I really
9 appreciate that you have explained that. And I
10 appreciate your work. I also appreciate the
11 fact that you are here today giving up of your
12 time to come forward and give us, you know, the
13 sense of your opinion and your experience.

14 MR. SHABAZZ: Sure. We have done things
15 with you in the past around agronomy. You
16 always tell everyone you're an agronomist.

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: I'm glad
18 somebody remembers I'm an agronomist.

19 MR. SHABAZZ: We also do projects with
20 Penn State extension. We have met quite a few
21 times.

22 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: But this is
23 very helpful. Thank you so you much.

24 MR. SHABAZZ: You're welcome.

25 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Madam Chair,

1 thank you.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You're
3 very well, Councilman.

4 Any other questions from members of the
5 Committee? For the benefit of the members of
6 the committee, this bill if passed would create
7 a commission focused on environmental justice.
8 It will also be required to create a report and
9 a list of recommendations for addressing
10 environmental injustice across Philadelphia. It
11 is the expectation that this commission would be
12 comprised of advocates, stakeholders, experts
13 and individuals who just care -- you don't need
14 a title -- most affected by environmental
15 justice; namely, the poor and people of color.

16 So with that stated, we are going to --
17 and there being no further questions and no
18 further testimony, there being no further
19 testimony, we will close our Public Hearing and
20 go into a Public Meeting.

21 (Public Hearing adjourned.)

22 - - -

23 (Public Meeting commences.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: The Chair
25 at this point will recognize my colleague

1 Councilwoman Bass, also in attendance today for
2 a motion on Bill No. 170712.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you, Madam
4 Chair. I make a motion that Bill No. 170712,
5 that the amendments to this bill -- that the
6 amendments to Bill No. 170712 be adopted. These
7 amendments have been circulated to the members
8 of the committee.

9 (Duly seconded.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay. It
11 has been moved and properly seconded that the
12 amendment to Bill No. 170712 be approved.

13 All those in favor of the motion will
14 signify by saying aye.

15 (Ayes.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: All those
17 opposed?

18 (No opposition.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: The motion
20 carries. And Bill No. 170712 has been amended.

21 The Chair again recognizes Councilwoman
22 Bass for a motion on Bill No. 170712 as amended.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you, Madam
24 Chair. I make a motion that Bill No. 170712 as
25 amended be adopted with a suspension of the

1 rules.

2 (Duly seconded.)

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. And
4 so, it has been moved and properly seconded that
5 Bill No. 170712 as amended will be reported from
6 this committee with a favorable recommendation;
7 and further move that the Rules of Council will
8 be suspended so as to permit first reading at
9 our next scheduled session of Philadelphia City
10 Council.

11 All those in favor of the motion will
12 signify by saying aye.

13 (Ayes.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: All those
15 opposed?

16 (No opposition.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: The motion
18 carries. And Bill No. 170712 as amended will be
19 reported from this committee with a favorable
20 recommendation. And again, a request that the
21 Rules of Council be suspended to permit first
22 reading at our next scheduled session of
23 Philadelphia City Council.

24 So with that, we have taken action on a
25 bill. And now I want to thank my colleagues for

1 helping us get that part of this meeting done.

2 Thank you very, very much.

3 We will now end the Public Meeting and
4 go back into a Public Hearing so that we can now
5 hear testimony on Resolution 180706.

6 (Public Meeting concludes.)

7 - - -

8 (Public Hearing recommences.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: We are
10 going to ask the clerk to read the title of that
11 resolution. And I will proceed with the reading
12 of our first set of witnesses.

13 THE CLERK: Authorizing the Committee on
14 the Environment to hold hearings on the state of
15 the environment in 2018.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you
17 very, very, very much. We have a new
18 stakeholder and leader in this space here in the
19 City of Philadelphia. And I want to thank Haji
20 Meloumiam for introducing all of us to Andrew L.
21 Shea, who is the COO and member of RNG Energy.
22 They will be doing some incredibly busy
23 necessary work of constructing a new effort --
24 when are you going to start that new effort?

25 The great news about this was that it

1 was actually discussed during the days of
2 President Verna was president of Philadelphia
3 City Council. To see the effort come to
4 fruition is a big deal. Thank you very, very
5 much.

6 Let's call up our first panel for
7 hearing testimony on Resolution 180706 on the
8 state of the environment.

9 We are going to start with Christine
10 Knapp. And again, I am going to lean on all
11 witnesses to, please, honor the clock and offer
12 two minutes of testimony on this topic.

13 Christine Knapp, you're up.

14 MS. KNAPP: Thank you, Councilwoman.

15 As I previously said, I'm Christine
16 Knapp, Office of Sustainability Director. Thank
17 you for the opportunity to provide testimony on
18 the state of the environment in Philadelphia.
19 And again, thank you to the Councilwoman for
20 your continuing leadership.

21 The Office of Sustainability is response
22 for Greenworks, a vision for sustainable
23 Philadelphia, which aims to make Philadelphia a
24 sustainable City for all. Today I'm happy to
25 share with you some success stories in each of

1 our Greenworks vision areas and some priorities
2 for the coming year. And I will try to keep it
3 to two minutes.

4 Vision one of Greenworks is that all
5 Philadelphians have access to healthy,
6 affordable and sustainable food and drinking
7 water. This year, the Food Policy Advisory
8 Council updated the Good Food Caterer Guide and
9 the Philly Food Finder Guide, providing
10 briefings to Councilmembers on food resources
11 and childhood nutrition and gathered feedback on
12 the process for creating an urban agriculture
13 plan for the City.

14 We were recently awarded a William Penn
15 Foundation Grant to support the creation of this
16 urban ag master plan, which we will embark upon
17 this year. To increase water access, we
18 recently installed a hydration station in
19 publicly accessible areas of the Municipal
20 Services Building, One Parkway Building. The
21 Hydrate Philly Project helped to get 20
22 hydration stations installed in parks and
23 recreation facilities throughout the City. And
24 the Water Department continues to educate
25 residents about lead pipes and offers no

1 interest loans for lead pipe replacement.

2 Vision two is that all Philadelphians
3 breathe healthy air inside and outside. This
4 past year, partners at the Air Management
5 Services Division of the Health Department
6 installed 54 air monitors in targeted areas of
7 the City to assess street level pollution and
8 identify solutions where pollution is high. We
9 know one source of pollution comes from our
10 vehicles. So, the City is pursuing a Clean
11 Fleet Plan for the municipal fleet this year and
12 will be submitting applications to the
13 Volkswagen Settlement Fund to support purchase
14 of cleaner vehicles.

15 Vision three is that all Philadelphians
16 efficiently use clean energy that they can
17 afford. This year we also finalize empowering
18 our future, a clean energy vision for all
19 Philadelphia after the open comment period. We
20 also released a Clean Energy Vision Action Plan
21 that outlines immediate next steps the City can
22 take to meet our energy and climate goals. We
23 move forward with the implementation of several
24 strategies identified in the Municipal Energy
25 Master Plan including the Art Museum Energy

1 Efficiency Project and the Renewable Power
2 Purchase Agreement, which was just approved
3 earlier today.

4 We also published Solar Rooftops, a map
5 that enables residents and businesses to
6 estimate the solar potential of their rooftops.
7 And we continue to support energy efficiency
8 projects both in City buildings through our
9 Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Fund and
10 through the benchmarking program for the City's
11 largest commercial and multi-family buildings.

12 Vision four is that all Philadelphians
13 are prepared for climate change and reduce
14 carbon and pollution. This summer I mentioned
15 earlier, we conducted a client resiliency
16 project in Hunting Park. A community that
17 experiences temperatures as much as 22 degrees
18 hotter than in other neighborhoods. We surveyed
19 over 530 residents to understand how they
20 currently experience heat and what they would
21 like to see happen in their neighborhood to help
22 cool it down. With community input, we are
23 creating a heat plan for Hunting Park that we
24 hope to release in the next few months.

25 In fighting climate change, you probably

1 heard that Philadelphia won the Bloomberg
2 American Cities Climate Challenge Grant. While
3 details about this challenger are still being
4 finalized, we know this program is going to help
5 us scale up carbon reductions from the buildings
6 and transportation sectors. And we look forward
7 to sharing more with you on that work in the
8 coming months.

9 Vision five is that all Philadelphians
10 benefit from park trees, stormwater management
11 and healthy waterways. The Philadelphia Water
12 Department continues to implement Green City
13 Clean Waters projects in parks, schoolyards,
14 sidewalks and vacant lots to reduce harmful
15 runoff but provide other triple line benefits to
16 our City.

17 The Rebuild Team is incorporating
18 sustainability standards into their work to
19 ensure investments are in line with our climate
20 litigation and resiliency goals. TreePhilly
21 just received a TD Bank donation to expand that
22 program's reach this coming year. We will be
23 embarking on updating the City's tree canopy map
24 and setting a new plan for increasing
25 Philadelphia's tree canopy, particularly in the

1 area that needs it the most.

2 Vision six is that all Philadelphians
3 have access to safe, affordable and low carbon
4 transportation. Just last month the Office of
5 Transportation, Infrastructure and
6 Sustainability released CONNECT, Philadelphia's
7 strategic transportation plan which sets goals
8 to make our streets safer for cyclists,
9 pedestrians and other low carbon commuters as
10 well as increasing the accessibility of public
11 transportation.

12 Already, Indigo has announced a major
13 expansion. And SEPTA is moving ahead with the
14 redesign of the bus network. Both of which will
15 increase access to low or no carbon
16 transportation options.

17 Vision seven is that all Philadelphians
18 waste less and keep our neighborhoods clean. We
19 are proud to be part of the Zero Waste and
20 Litter Cabinet in their work this year in
21 creating the Litter Index, rounding up over
22 8,000 illegal signs and implementing zero waste
23 events. In fact, this year we diverted over 23
24 tons of organic materials from a landfill at
25 events like Broad Street Run and the Marathon.

1 Done work with the cabinet on compost
2 design composition to help identify new compost
3 system types that can be used by community
4 gardens and farm, and then distributed these
5 systems through a mini grant program. Next year
6 we are hoping to large a community scale
7 composting program throughout the City.

8 Lastly, vision eight is that
9 Philadelphians benefit from sustainability
10 education, employment and business
11 opportunities. Our most critical partner in
12 this effort is the School District of
13 Philadelphia and their Green Futures Program,
14 which is advancing sustainability in the
15 district operations and in their curriculum.

16 Our friends at the Philadelphia Energy
17 Authority are also working with the District on
18 solar training as part of the Philadelphia
19 campaign, which aims to create 10,000 energy
20 jobs. And Power Corp PHL continues to train
21 disconnected youth to prepare them for Green
22 careers. All of this work demonstrates that
23 cities like Philadelphia continue to lead on
24 sustainability.

25 And while we can do a lot, we can't do

1 all that is necessary to fight climate change
2 without federal action. That's why we also
3 pushed back this year on the roll back of the
4 Clean Power Plan and the fuel efficiency
5 standards. And we will continue to push for
6 smart regulations that protect our planet and
7 our residents at the state and federal level.
8 We know there is a lot more work ahead of us.
9 We are excited to keep you posted about the
10 progress that you're making and how you can
11 partner with us as well as the community and
12 other advocacy organizations.

13 At this time, I'm happy to answer any
14 questions.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Any
16 questions from members of the committee?

17 I'm most struck by the observation or
18 the fact data around Hunting Park. What are
19 your initial strategies to attack that
20 unfortunate reality?

21 MS. KNAPP: Yes. We have, again,
22 surveyed the residents to ask them what they
23 thought the solutions would be. We don't want
24 to jump to conclusions. We did certainly got a
25 lot of feedback that residents are interested in

1 trees. I think there is a perception in
2 Philadelphia that neighborhoods that don't have
3 a lot of trees, and that is not the case. In
4 Hunting Park, the eastern side of the
5 neighborhood is primarily Spanish speaking. And
6 up until about a year ago, we never had any
7 materials about how to get a tree translated
8 into Spanish. So as soon as those materials
9 became available, there's been tree plantings
10 going on in those Spanish-speaking communities a
11 higher rate. That was one barrier we
12 identified. And the community members are
13 looking for me tree planting and they are
14 coming. We just planted 47 about two weeks
15 ago --

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Is that
17 right?

18 MS. KNAPP: -- in Hunting Park.

19 We also are hearing from folks about
20 their interest in cool roofs. We know that
21 blacktop roofs draw heat into the home. The
22 problem there is that a lot of homes are in
23 older condition, and you need to have a stable
24 roof to be able to put a white roof coat on it.
25 So, sometimes there is more investment that

1 needs to be made in the home than just the roof.
2 We are working with several partners to
3 understand how we can bring basic system home
4 repair programs or other programs to those homes
5 to enable the white roof to then be put on after
6 the fact. So there is a number of different
7 strategies.

8 You know, whether that's cool
9 transportation options, give people access to
10 bikes or corridors tree lined to help them get
11 from Point A to Point B, cooling centers as a
12 strategy because that is sort of whole list of
13 ideas that we are now working with the community
14 to put detail behind.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: My second
16 and final question is, to what extent is your
17 office intimately involved and infused in
18 Rebuild?

19 MS. KNAPP: As I mentioned in my
20 testimony, we have been writing sustainable
21 building standards for Rebuild so that when any
22 investments into that physical building, you
23 know, at a rec center or library is done, they
24 will be using our building standards to make
25 sure that the building envelope is to the right

1 degree. That the HVAC system is being
2 considered as most energy efficient as possible.
3 That the lighting is upgraded to LEDs. Those
4 standards are being, as you said, intimately
5 integrated into Rebuild. There is other climate
6 resiliency and Green stormwater infrastructure
7 and other concerns that were also advancing.
8 But the part that I think is most integrated in,
9 is that those stars are going to be required.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: It's
11 really important because those dollars are a
12 shot in the arm. And we need to maximize the
13 use of those in a way that has long-term
14 environmental benefits, as well.

15 MS. KNAPP: And I think investing in the
16 resiliency of the building would make it so we
17 don't have to do this kind of shot in the arm,
18 you know, in 20 years.

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Yes.

20 MS. KNAPP: These buildings are
21 protected and will be able to withstand the
22 hotter and wetter weather that we know climate
23 change will bring for Philadelphia.

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: For the
25 long haul. Okay then. Thank you very, very,

1 very, very much.

2 First panel up --

3 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Madam Chair?

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Please,
5 Councilman Taubenberger.

6 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Point of
7 information.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

9 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Just one quick
10 fact. Thank you for you leadership on this
11 entire matter. I want to be on the record of
12 this.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Sure. I
14 enjoy it.

15 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And,
16 Ms. Knapp, I really want to thank you for your
17 expert testimony. It's quite helpful.

18 My comment from your agronomic counsel
19 colleague is that a tree-lined street will
20 always be quieter, it will be several degrees
21 cooler, and real estate values would be several
22 thousands dollars higher just on a tree-lined
23 street, nothing further about the house itself.
24 Those three things make a difference in the
25 neighborhood.

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: And
2 educating to this environmental injustice
3 discussion, educating citizens about that
4 reality moves the needle a little for the poor
5 and those in underserved communities.

6 Is PHS still in the tree planting
7 business that they have every spring?

8 MS. KNAPP: Yes. The horticultural
9 society still does a spring and a fall tree
10 planting. The City's, obviously TreePhilly
11 Program, does giveaways throughout different
12 points of the year. Two planting seasons early
13 in the fall and the spring. Those are when we
14 usually see the biggest tree planting events
15 going on.

16 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Ms. Knapp, if
17 I could ever be of any help to talk to
18 neighborhood groups about the benefit of tree
19 planting as a street tree, please call on me. I
20 would be happy to meet with anybody at any time.

21 MS. KNAPP: I appreciate that. Just to
22 draw connections around some of these. When we
23 look at the tree canopy map and we look at that
24 heat map I mentioned, there's a clear
25 correlation. And so, when we were in Hunting

1 Park, folks who had a predisposition against a
2 tree, once they understood the value related to
3 heat immediately said, forget it, I want the
4 tree. Forget about my previous complaint, I
5 actually really want the tree now. It is about
6 education.

7 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: If at any time
8 I can help in that educational process and see
9 people with greater enlightenment on that topic,
10 count on me. I'm there.

11 MS. KNAPP: I appreciate it.

12 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you
14 Christine Knapp.

15 Panel first up, Alex Dews, Green
16 Building United; Matt Walker, Clean Air Council;
17 Eliza Kelsten Alford, Sustainable Business
18 Network; Mollie Michel, Mom's Clean Air Force.

19 Following that panel will be Jim Wylie
20 of the Sierra Club; Pratima Agrawal, Ready for
21 100; Karen Melton and James Best -- you'll be up
22 next.

23 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Welcome
25 back, Alex Dews.

1 MR. DEWS: Thank you very much.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Please,
3 each state your name for the record and proceed
4 with your testimony.

5 MR. DEWS: Thank you, Chairwoman
6 Reynolds Brown and Members of the Committee. My
7 name is Alex Dews and I'm the Executive Director
8 of Green Building United. I want to also start
9 by thanking you, Councilwoman, for your
10 leadership on this issue over a number of years
11 and congratulate all of you and the Office of
12 Sustainability on the passage of the Power
13 Purchase Agreement.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Big deal.

15 MR. DEWS: That's a real step forward
16 for the City of Philadelphia. And I think as
17 the Federal Government looks at Green New Deal,
18 there is going to be a lot to draw on from the
19 example here in Philadelphia of all the good
20 work happening in the area. So, congrats to all
21 the advocates as well to making that happen.

22 We are the region's leading green
23 building organization. We promote the
24 development of buildings that are sustainable,
25 healthy for inhabitants, resilient and cost

1 effective. And we focus on buildings and the
2 people that live and work in them to
3 significantly reduce energy use and wastes and
4 mitigate claimant and environmental impacts that
5 affect all Philadelphians.

6 Residents here in Philly are already
7 being threatened by the effects f climate
8 change, especially those already most vulnerable
9 to health problems caused by poor air quality,
10 high heat days as well as those most affected by
11 the rising costs to heat, cool and maintain
12 buildings. And even in the most optimistic
13 climate forecast for the decades ahead, the
14 impacts are going to increase significantly
15 here.

16 In the absence of the federal
17 leadership, Philadelphia has stepped up to the
18 plate to fight climate change by setting
19 ambitious goals to reduce Citywide carbon
20 emissions 80 percent by the year 2050. And the
21 Office of Sustainability released Powering Our
22 Future last year, which a vision for how
23 Philadelphia is actually going to get there.
24 This reports data analysis and modeling shows
25 that while every bit of progress is important on

1 the way to achieving these reductions, buildings
2 are still the primary driver of climate change
3 in our region and the best opportunity to
4 mitigate and adapt to the future and current
5 climate impacts we will see.

6 Green Building United is excited to
7 continue to support the action steps that are
8 required for Philadelphia to meet its carbon
9 reduction goals through existing strategic
10 initiatives and state and local legislative
11 advocacy efforts. In the years ahead, we intend
12 to grow the impact of the Philadelphia 2030
13 District to its full potential to cement the
14 improved deficiency from our newly adopted
15 building energy codes and expand our legislative
16 advocacy priorities to the residential sector to
17 the benefit of Philadelphia homeowners and
18 renters.

19 So, a lot more in my written testimony.
20 But just to summarize, in the year ahead we will
21 be look at moving towards residential energy
22 disclosure to compliment the commercial building
23 disclosure that we have in place already.
24 Essentially, assigning a miles per gallon to the
25 homes that we live in to help people understand

1 what the full cost of ownership or leasing in a
2 space is, and also be looking at building
3 commercial building tune-up opportunities to
4 continue to improve the efficiency of our large
5 commercial buildings because we got a lot more
6 opportunity there. We are still wasting about
7 30 percent of what gets used in commercial
8 buildings.

9 So again, a place where the City is
10 leading by example. And a lot of great progress
11 that we can replicate in the commercial sector.
12 And so with that, happy to take any questions.
13 But thank you again for the opportunity and for
14 you leadership on the issue.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Please,
16 Matt Walker.

17 MR. WALKER: Good afternoon.

18 Thank you Councilwoman Reynolds Brown
19 and Members of the Committee for having me. My
20 name is Matt Walker, and I'm the advocacy
21 director for Clean Air Council. The Council's
22 been working to protect everyone's right to
23 breathe clean air for over 50 years. And has
24 37,000 activist members, including many in the
25 Philadelphia area. I also serve in the

1 Committee for Green Justice Philly.

2 According to the recent
3 intergovernmental panel on climate change
4 report, we only have eleven years to cut
5 greenhouse gas emissions 45 percent to avoid
6 catastrophic climate change. The recently
7 released fourth national climate assessment
8 found that climate change has already increased
9 ground level ozone across the country. And
10 levels are expected to increase more in the
11 future. The Philadelphia area continues to
12 struggle to meet federal standards for ground
13 level ozone.

14 Given the current dismal state of our
15 region's air quality and impact stemming from
16 climate change, we must make unprecedented rapid
17 and aggressive transitions in all sectors of our
18 economy to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions.
19 The City's demonstrated leadership on air
20 quality and climate change with several recent
21 actions like the Solar Power Purchase Agreement,
22 thank you, Solarized Philly and the Clean Energy
23 Vision to name a few. These are all great
24 steps. But City Council must do more, do it
25 more quickly and make sure what it does is as

1 effective as possible.

2 Proposals like PGW's L&G Plan threaten
3 to lock us into additional decades of reliance
4 on natural gas far longer than the IPCC
5 deadline. The proposal also conflict's with the
6 City's Clean Energy Vision. The amount of time
7 and public resources going into this project
8 could be much better spent on renewable energy
9 or efficiency projects.

10 Another environmental concern is the
11 inadequate remediation planning process that the
12 Philadelphia Energy Solutions Refinery, as
13 highlighted in recent Climate Center for Energy
14 Policy Report, Sunoco is reliable for
15 remediating the historic levels of contamination
16 at the refinery. Sunoco has denied local
17 residents, City agencies and elected officials
18 the opportunity to provide input on the
19 remediation plans. The DEP has quickly approved
20 Sunoco's analysis and weak cleanup standards for
21 eight of the eleven sites of the refinery
22 property.

23 Given the proximity of the refinery to
24 environmental justice neighborhoods and major
25 environmental impacts, the lack of public input

1 so far is unacceptable. According to the
2 report, PS is likely to go bankrupt again by
3 2022 when its debts mature. It is imperative
4 that the City of Philadelphia, area residents,
5 labor and other stakeholders engage in a process
6 to ensure proper remediation and also explore
7 alternative redevelopment scenarios at the
8 refinery sites so that the future uses can
9 inform adequate remediation planning for the
10 parcels.

11 Another environmental concern is the
12 large source of illegal air pollution from
13 trucks, buses and cars when they idle.
14 Philadelphia's own fleet of nearly 6,000
15 vehicles also contribute to this problem.

16 Lastly, plastic bag usage and littering
17 in Philadelphia creates eyesores in our
18 neighborhoods and increases demand for polluting
19 petrochemical facilities that make them. Every
20 year Philadelphia uses almost 1 billion plastic
21 bags. And the City spends millions of dollars
22 to clean up litter bags.

23 In response to the above issues, Clean
24 Air Council urges City Council to take the
25 following actions: Increase funding for Air

1 Management Services, urge PGW to evaluate the
2 potential long term economic benefits of
3 entering into an on-site solar power purchase
4 agreement at its Passyunk plant property, delay
5 any decision on the PGW L&G Plant until after
6 City Council and City departments have fully
7 evaluated the long term business plan for PGW
8 that fully transitions it off of fossil fuel
9 natural gas, demand that DEP allow public input
10 into remediation plans for the PES Refinery
11 Site, adopt a resolution requiring the
12 Philadelphia Parking Authority, Philadelphia
13 Police Department and Air Management Services to
14 fully enforce the City's existing idling laws by
15 issuing tickets, and for each City agency to
16 train their employees and develop an anti-idling
17 policy that complies with the law, support
18 Councilman Squilla's upcoming bill to ban
19 plastic bags and place a small fee on other all
20 single use bags.

21 In addition, there are a number policies
22 outlined in the Clean Energy Vision, the City
23 Council should propose as soon as possible:
24 Density bonuses for new construction that
25 includes solar, tax abatement for solar and

1 energy efficiency projects and newer modified
2 buildings, municipal impact fees for developers
3 who do not meet developmentally conscious design
4 standards, reducing the building energy
5 benchmarking threshold to 25,000 square feet,
6 require property owners to get building tuneups
7 in which a professional identifies energy and
8 cost saving measures that can be quickly
9 implemented, require commercial and residential
10 buildings owners selling property to meet the
11 current energy conservation code at the time of
12 sale subject to technical feasibility, require
13 homeowners to disclose residential energy scores
14 in the multiple listing service, reevaluate
15 potential additional permits stream lining for
16 solar projects, explore additional power
17 purchase agreements with the City's energy
18 office and the Philadelphia Energy Authority
19 especially on site projects in or near
20 Philadelphia.

21 I look forward to City Council taking
22 visionary and creative actions to advance
23 Philadelphia's clean energy future. Thank you
24 for your time and consideration.

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: We will

1 hear the testimony, and then open it up to
2 questions and comments.

3 MS. ALFORD: Thank you, Councilwoman
4 Reynolds Brown and Members of the Environment
5 Committee for your time today and the
6 opportunity to testify. I'm Eliza Alford, the
7 Government Relations Manager for the Sustainable
8 Business Network of Greater Philadelphia.

9 SBN is a community of local and
10 dependent businesses that demonstrate the degree
11 to which businesses can build profitable
12 enterprises while serving community needs,
13 sharing wealth and protecting the environment.
14 Our mission is to build a just, green and
15 thriving economy.

16 As a business organization, our concern
17 for the state of the environment comes from our
18 understanding that environmental, social and
19 economic systems are fully interdependent. We
20 cannot continue to compromise our natural
21 resources and overlook the needs of our
22 communities in order to profit in the
23 short-term. Instead, we must take the long
24 view. Understanding that we have an immense
25 opportunity to innovate and grow our economy's

1 sustainably and equitably by investing in
2 solutions that benefit people, planet and
3 profit.

4 Philadelphia is quickly being recognized
5 as a leader in sustainability. And we applaud
6 the Council's role in helping move the City
7 forward. SBN and its members see the areas of
8 energy, water and food as key to moving along
9 the path to a just, green and thriving economy.
10 But for the sake of time, I will only address
11 water in my testimony this afternoon. And our
12 other priorities are included in our written
13 testimony.

14 As climate change creates wetter seasons
15 and our region stormwater management will become
16 even more important for protecting our rivers,
17 streams and tributaries. Green City Clean
18 Waters, Philadelphia's long term control plan
19 for stormwater management is the perfect example
20 of an innovative sustainable solution to a
21 critical problem. It improves water quality and
22 creates green space in all communities,
23 improving air quality, reducing heat island
24 effects, lowering carbon emissions and providing
25 safe, healthy places for residents to enjoy the

1 outdoors.

2 Additionally, the plan has led to a
3 thriving internationally recognized industry
4 working right here in Philadelphia. Green City
5 Clean Waters has been successful over the last
6 seven years. And we need to double down on our
7 commitment by promoting interagency
8 coordination, creating a strong accountability
9 structure and continuing to development
10 incentives for private sector investment, we
11 will see the full triple bottom-line benefits
12 that the program can provide, including making
13 our streets safer, creating green space within
14 walking distance of all Philadelphians,
15 streamlining capital projects and continuing to
16 support a strong local economy.

17 Green City Clean Waters can be a model
18 for how to build a sustainable, equitable and
19 resilient City.

20 Thank you again for the opportunity to
21 testify. SBN appreciates your proactive
22 approach, and is excited to continue working
23 with Council to build a just, green and thriving
24 Philadelphia.

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Mollie

1 Michel, Mom's Clean Air Council. Welcome back.

2 MS. MICHEL: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Mollie Michel. I'm the Pennsylvania field
4 organizer for Mom's Clean Air Force, a community
5 of more than 95,000 moms and dads in
6 Pennsylvania united against air pollution to
7 protect our children's health. Thank you for
8 allowing me to speak at this hearing today.

9 Today I'd like to focus on a topic that
10 we don't talk about in Philadelphia as often as
11 we should. And that is natural gas fracking
12 pollution, including methane, which is a potent
13 greenhouse gas that we know as a major
14 contributor to climate change.

15 Until recently, with the problem-riddle
16 construction of the Mariner East 2 Pipeline,
17 Philadelphia have had the luxury of living far
18 away from well pads, pipelines, compressor
19 stations, picking stations, cryogenic plants and
20 other natural gas infrastructure that has
21 plagued the southwestern part of our state for
22 more than a decade. Here in Philadelphia, we
23 have by and large been able to turn a blind eye
24 to the human cost of our energy consumption and
25 dependence on fossil fuels.

1 Now that the natural gas industry is
2 creeping into our backyard, including a proposal
3 to build a liquified natural gas plant in
4 Southwest Philadelphia and the SEPTA natural gas
5 plant in Nicetown, we can't afford to ignore it
6 anymore, particularly as methane emissions are
7 on the rise in Pennsylvania and beyond. And as
8 the federal government rules back environmental
9 protections of all kinds.

10 Pennsylvania is the second largest
11 producer of natural gases in the nation; and
12 thus, a significant contributor of the natural
13 gas pollution including Benzine, diesel
14 emission, formaldehyde, particle pollution,
15 silica dust, smog and that potent greenhouse gas
16 methane.

17 Because air pollution can travel long
18 distances, people's health can be affected even
19 hundreds of miles from the associated pollution.
20 I am sure many of us noticed the haze that
21 settled over Philadelphia about ten days ago
22 that was attributed to the wild fires in
23 California. That haze should drive home the
24 fact that even if we can't see it or smell it,
25 Philadelphians are impacted every day by the

1 estimated 500,000 tons of methane pollution
2 currently leaking from oil and gas operations
3 across the state.

4 As we continue to look toward a cleaner
5 energy future, we must also address these leaks
6 from oil and gas, whole bad industry actors
7 responsible and promote the health and well
8 being of the hundreds of thousands of
9 Pennsylvanians who are suffering severe impacts
10 of these operations every day. More
11 importantly, Philadelphia should not be looking
12 at proposals or approving permits that in any
13 way increase our dependence on fossil fuels,
14 particularly one that emits such a dangerous
15 climate pollutant like methane.

16 In June, in a huge first step to address
17 our methane crisis, Governor Wolf issued new
18 general permits to limit methane pollution for
19 future and modified sources, and will be
20 introducing a proposal next month to address the
21 more than 11,000 existing sources of methane in
22 the state. In this toxic culture of polluters
23 over people, Philadelphia's legislative decision
24 makers need to take old action now, protect the
25 health and well being of our children, cease new

1 investments in fossil fuel infrastructure, and
2 look toward a clean, safe energy future.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I thank
5 you, too. And I thank you for honoring the
6 clock.

7 Alex, could you speak about the
8 monitoring your testimony spoke to where we are
9 doing fairly well in the commercial side, but
10 now there is a keen interest to do that on the
11 residential side. Could you just elaborate on
12 that for us?

13 MR. DEWS: Sure. So about five years
14 ago, Philadelphia became one of a handful of
15 cities that requires large property owners to
16 benchmark energy usage, energy and water usage
17 in their buildings.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: That was
19 our bill thanks to Haji Meloumian and others.

20 MR. DEWS: Thanks very much for that.
21 We have a lot of information about how those
22 buildings perform relative to their peers.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Excellent.

24 MR. DEWS: That information is all
25 publicly available and mapped, so anybody can

1 look at it. And it's really helped the
2 commercial building owner industry to take stock
3 of the opportunity to make the improvement to
4 understand those investments, pay for themselves
5 really quickly. So what we are looking at now
6 is to move that into the residential sector
7 where's it's a little bit of a different
8 question of how to do that monitoring.

9 There are a lot of tools available that
10 have been developed by the Department of Energy
11 and elsewhere that help to do assessment of the
12 relative performance, the efficiency of the
13 whole. By putting that -- it's kind of a
14 consumer awareness piece of information, to get
15 that into the hands of potential buyers or
16 lessees of space so they can understand what the
17 full cost of ownership is. Because as you all
18 know, one of the leading causes of eviction can
19 be that people can't keep up with utility bills.

20 By doing this at time of transaction, it
21 becomes a negotiating point. And it's more
22 likely that the kinds of investments can make a
23 big difference in energy performance in homes.
24 Those investments will be made as part of the
25 negotiation, much less likely if that happens

1 outside of that time period.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

3 Well, my office and staff and I look forward to
4 drilling down and coming out with real language
5 that moves us towards that goal. That, too, can
6 become an environmental injustice if not done
7 right. Thank you very much.

8 My colleagues should know that Matt
9 Walker worked very, very closely with my office
10 around doing Med Week, whereby we wanted to
11 inform citizens that having contractors who
12 practice sustainable practices matter also
13 during Minority Business Enterprise week. So, I
14 wanted to salute the work that you did with my
15 office.

16 I am pleased to hear that Councilman
17 Squilla is still working on the plastic bags
18 bill. It's taken a minute, but it's best to try
19 to get it right instead of just doing it.
20 Pleased to hear about that.

21 Speak about municipal impact fees. Was
22 that in your -- one of your recommendations.

23 MR. WALKER: Yeah. This is one of the
24 recommendations from the Clean Energy Vision
25 to -- for developers who would not meet

1 environmentally conscious design standards, they
2 would before assessed a fee.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: There are
4 other municipalities already have that practice?

5 MR. WALKER: I believe so, but I can
6 follow up with you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Could you
8 please? Because we can look to see what lessons
9 are learned from other municipalities. That
10 aids us in how to do it right.

11 MR. WALKER: Sure.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay then.
13 And then with Eliza, incentives for triple
14 bottom line investments. Incentives such as
15 what?

16 MS. ALFORD: Sorry. Incentives for
17 investment in private development of green
18 stormwater infrastructure. So for example, one
19 that we already have is a density bonus for
20 private developers who include rain gardens.
21 So, thinking about other either legislation that
22 encourages those or other grant programs through
23 the Water Department to help encourage private
24 developers to manage stormwater on their sites
25 or maybe even include stormwater from the public

1 right-of-way and managing on their sites,
2 thinking about banking and trading to help
3 include public right-of-way stormwater
4 management.

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: So then,
6 you are actively engaged with officials at the
7 Water Department towards those goals?

8 MS. ALFORD: Yes. SBN works closely
9 with officials across the Water Department and
10 on Green City Clean Waters in helping them work
11 directly with our members in the GSA Partners
12 Program to connect them on what the industry
13 really is looking for and needs from the Water
14 Department to make the program really
15 successful.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.
17 Well, we done a lot of works with Mom's Clean
18 Air Council. We just need to grow that
19 membership by about 50,000.

20 I want to thank you all for your
21 testimony. Any questions from Members of the
22 Committee?

23 Councilwoman Bass.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just wanted to,
25 number one, thank everybody for their testimony

1 thus far. Actually, have to leave Chambers for
2 some other business. But I wanted to, number
3 one, thank everyone who has testified thus far.
4 I fully intend to read all of the testimony
5 that's been submitted and to catch, you know,
6 the testimony this evening on the cable access
7 channel, which I happen to be very, very
8 familiar with so I will be watching this
9 evening, as well.

10 But the other thing I wanted to make
11 mention of, and Councilmember and I were really
12 on the same page with some of the questions you
13 just asked. Because Mr. Walker with the
14 recommendations that you made, you know, it's
15 one thing to be upset or against a particular
16 policy. But it's a whole 'nother thing to be
17 armed with suggestions, ideas, things that we
18 can take away from a hearing so that we can, you
19 know, get some sort of direction from you, as
20 well. That's very important to us as Members of
21 Council.

22 I always tell people, please don't
23 assume that I know your street didn't get
24 shoveled or plowed or whatever. We need to hear
25 from you. That's the way this works best is

1 that when we hear from you and we have an
2 opportunity, based on recommendations that are
3 made to us from the public, to actually
4 implement things that are going to make a huge
5 difference in the City of Philadelphia. So, I
6 have a circled and checked off a number of items
7 on your list here that I think could really be
8 beneficial to the City of Philadelphia.

9 I just really wanted to thank you for
10 that, as well. Thanks, everyone.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: It's an
12 excellent list. It really, really is.

13 Any other questions? Comments?

14 So, Matt, what I am going to ask you is
15 to ID the top three, and then have a
16 conversation with Julian and give us our
17 assignment for 2019.

18 MR. WALKER: Top ten, got it. Got it.

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.
20 Thank you all.

21 Next panel: Jim Wylie of the Sierra
22 Club; Pratima I want you to pronounce your last
23 name for me so that I get it right; Karen Melton
24 and Charles Best.

25 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Good
2 afternoon, good afternoon, good afternoon.

3 MR. WYLIE: Good afternoon.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Is this
5 your first time all of you to the Chambers?

6 MR. WYLIE: First time I've testified,
7 yes.

8 MS. AGRAWAL: This is my second.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Forgive
10 me?

11 MS. AGRAWAL: This is my second time.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Well,
13 please pronounce your last name for me.

14 MS. AGRAWAL: A-gra-wal.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I'm --
16 phonetically.

17 MS. MICHEL: Okay. All right, then.
18 That's helpful. Please, Jim Wylie, Sierra Club.

19 MR. WYLIE: Hi. Thank you very much.
20 I'm Jim Wylie. I'm the volunteer chair of the
21 Sierra Club Southeastern Pennsylvania Group.
22 Southeastern Pennsylvania being the Greater
23 Philadelphia area, the five counties around it
24 including Philadelphia. I'm shooting for one
25 minute here.

1 Sierra Club has a broad scope with
2 expertise and resources that cover a wide range
3 of issues, research, legal advisors, organizers,
4 conservation activists and outings leaders. I
5 hope you will not hesitate to take advantage of
6 these resources whenever you think they might be
7 of service to this committee.

8 In the Philadelphia area, we primarily
9 rely on volunteer leaders to set our priorities.
10 We are not given direction to focus on this or
11 that from state or national program managers, we
12 are truly volunteer lead and staff supported.

13 Sierra Club's 2019 priorities are in the
14 Greater Philadelphia area 100 percent renewable
15 energy, goal setting, transition planning and
16 promoting momentum shifting actions like the PPA
17 we did this morning. Thank you.

18 Two, plastics. Reduction of single use
19 plastic. For example, bag, bottles, straws and
20 takeout containers through education,
21 alternatives, promotion, listening and research
22 and suggesting and supporting legislation with a
23 goal of reducing litter, landfill and
24 incinerator contributions.

25 And three, lastly, public

1 transportation. Public transit. Explore ways
2 that we can work together to reduce and --
3 reduce the region's transportation carbon
4 footprint by increasing mass transit ridership,
5 increased electrification, and using renewable
6 sources for that electricity.

7 We look forward to working with the
8 Philadelphia City Council, Mayor's Office,
9 SEPTA, PGW, other environmental organizations
10 that I expect you will hear similar priorities
11 today, suburban municipal governments and
12 institutions and, of course, volunteers and
13 activists that make up our communities.
14 Certainly, if we have programs that spread
15 across the region, it would be more powerful
16 than cherry picking specific municipalities.

17 Of course, there would be other projects
18 and initiatives that engage volunteers. These
19 are the ones we would like to highlight at this
20 time. I'm hoping you hear some consistent
21 priorities from others that testify today.

22 On behalf of the Sierra Club and the
23 Southeast Pennsylvania Group Executive
24 Committee, thank you very much.

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you

1 very, very, very much, Jim Wylie, for honoring
2 the clock. You should know that SEPTA is
3 thrilled to hear what you are saying. I know
4 because they are actually represented here. So,
5 I believe in connecting the dots. And so when
6 you can, you want to meet City Council's
7 representative for SEPTA, Ms. Wendy Prescott.

8 I want to thank SEPTA for their presence
9 here today. You can put the name with the face,
10 okay? All righty. Thank you very much.

11 Please, next.

12 MS. AGRAWAL: Good afternoon,
13 Councilwoman and the Committee. My name is
14 Pratima Agrawal. I am a Kensington resident and
15 a volunteer with Philadelphia Ready For 100
16 Campaign of the Sierra Club. We are an all
17 volunteer run campaign with a mission to help
18 transition the City to -- City of Philadelphia
19 to hundred percent clean renewable energy in an
20 equitable way.

21 Since January of 2017, we have been
22 sounding the alarm about the need for the City
23 to move away from fossil fuels and embrace the
24 benefits that come with a green economy. We are
25 not alone in seeing the urgency of this

1 transition. In October 2018, the
2 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
3 Special Report said we could be facing a global
4 climate crisis as early 2040, maybe sooner.
5 Most recently, the federal government issued the
6 fourth national climate assessment report which
7 states that past predictions about the impact of
8 global warming has materialized, that these
9 impacts are tied to each other and will
10 negatively effect our economy.

11 In addition, many coastal cities are
12 particularly unprepared with rising sea levels.
13 Our air quality will continue to deteriorate and
14 our water supply threatened by antiquated
15 drainage and sewer systems, unable to handle
16 heavier loads of precipitation for more big
17 storm events. These factors are further
18 problematic for a City like Philadelphia already
19 ranked 12th for particle pollution with many
20 neighborhoods in low lying areas prone to
21 flooding, and the poorest large city in the U.S.

22 The state of Philadelphia's environment
23 is already bad and on a path to becoming
24 significantly worse if we do not act now. Our
25 campaign has had some successes in the past

1 year, including helping to support City
2 Council's Municipal Energy Bill No. 180965 for
3 the state's largest power purchase agreement.
4 Congratulations on this first step and thank for
5 your leadership.

6 But our campaign has not been without
7 challenges. We have found it difficult to
8 create a sense of urgency around the imminent
9 crisis of climate change among City officials in
10 order to prompt action before it's too late. We
11 have seen repeated neglect of environmental
12 justice for neighborhoods most negatively
13 impacted by fossil fuels and climate change.
14 And we have seen a reluctance towards goal
15 setting in spite of many other major cities
16 already having done so.

17 We have to ask ourselves why that is?
18 Does it require a major environmental disaster
19 to wake up to reality? I certainly hope not.
20 We only need to look to the California wildfires
21 to know that we do not want our City on the back
22 end of devastating climate crisis. So, let's be
23 proactive. The Ready For 100 team is ready to
24 move forward into 2019 as an ally to the City.
25 We hope to hold a hearing in early 2019 in

1 support of the Office of Sustainabilities
2 Municipal Energy Master Plan, which sets a
3 municipal goal for a hundred percent renewable
4 electricity. Later, we hope to have a hearing
5 on setting a Citywide goal of hundred percent
6 renewable electricity.

7 We hope to work with all of you and
8 other Councilmembers to draft legislative
9 proposals, we have started in our action plan
10 which is included with my testimony. We plan to
11 partners with CDCs, NECs and community
12 organizations to hold educational events. And
13 we also want to plan -- we also plan to increase
14 our outreach to small and large businesses.

15 And finally, we want to build support
16 for transitioning PGW away from fossil fuels.
17 Our team is offering three different
18 recommendations to do this.

19 One, transition PGW into a clean energy
20 generation utility. Two, transition PGW into a
21 clean energy storage facility. And three,
22 explore the idea participating in a regional
23 clean energy transition plan by a third party.

24 We are happy to meet with all of you to
25 discuss these possibilities in more detail. And

1 thank you for providing this platform today.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Welcome.

3 Before we move to Ms. Karen Melton, I
4 want to thank the two of you for working with my
5 office on a resolution where we are actually
6 going to study, take a close look at the
7 municipal master plan. Your work with us does
8 not go unappreciated. Thank you.

9 Have you sat with PGW? Have you
10 registered your concerns formally with PGW?

11 MS. AGRAWAL: Not at this moment.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

13 MS. AGRAWAL: We are just starting.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I would
15 urge you to do exactly what you have done here
16 for me. If it's not in writing, it doesn't
17 exist. So, to send a formal request asking for
18 an opportunity -- you can speak during your
19 testimony -- that would be an order. Can I hold
20 people responsible for that, which were not
21 brought to their attention?

22 While this is an opportunity to do that,
23 speaking directly to them as well at a
24 commission hearing would be quite an order,
25 okay?

1 MS. AGRAWAL: Okay. Thank you.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: All right
3 then. Karen Melton.

4 MS. MELTON: Good afternoon. Thank you
5 for the opportunity to speak today. I live in
6 Northwest Philadelphia. And while I volunteer
7 with a number of environmental organizations, I
8 am testifying today as a citizen. There is a
9 lot going on right now that will help determine
10 our City's energy future, but it's a mix of good
11 and bad.

12 As the fourth national climate
13 assessment report issued last week made clear,
14 the impact of climate change are already upon
15 us. We have very little time in which to get
16 off fossil fuels. There isn't time for new
17 fossil fuel projects with 20 to 30 year
18 operational horizons. The Renewable Energy
19 Power Purchase Agreement for City-owned
20 buildings and street lights is a great step
21 forward.

22 In other positive news, SEPTA has issued
23 it's own RFP for renewable energy and received a
24 grant for ten electric buses in addition to the
25 twenty-five already on order. However, at that

1 same time, SEPTA has hundred more diesel-run
2 buses under contract to be delivered over the
3 next several years. Those hundreds of diesel
4 buses will be operating into the 2030s, and we
5 don't have that much time.

6 This SEPTA gas fired power plant at
7 Wayne Junction, which has six Health Department
8 permit appeal hearing sessions scheduled for
9 January 8, will be a new source of pollution ins
10 a community already burdened with air pollution
11 and a new source of carbon emissions for at
12 least twenty years, and we don't have that much
13 time. Philadelphia Gas Works has presented a
14 proposal to the Gas Commission to partner with a
15 private company to build a new liquified gas
16 facility at PGW South Philadelphia Plant that
17 would operate for the next twenty-five years,
18 and we don't have that much time.

19 We need all hands on deck in
20 Philadelphia with every agency working toward a
21 clean energy vision to reduce carbon emissions.
22 City Council and this committee in particular
23 needs to not just pass projects in support of
24 the Clean Energy Vision, it needs to prevent new
25 fossil fuel projects from being built. That's

1 really where we are in 2018. We just don't have
2 much time. Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Your very,
4 very welcome. With the benefit of hindsight,
5 which is always 20/20, I am thinking my staff
6 and I probably should have made a request to
7 have both PECO and PGW here. But this goes out
8 to the world. And those who seek to register
9 their interests make their own decisions. And
10 so, your recommendations are very, very well
11 taken. And my staff and I will do a follow up
12 in our own way.

13 Thank you very much.

14 Please, good afternoon.

15 MS. LANCASTER: Good afternoon,
16 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown and Cindy Bass is my
17 Councilperson and Councilman Taubenberger who is
18 walking around the building somewhere.

19 My name is Rhonda Lancaster. I am a
20 42-year resident of Germantown at the upside of
21 Fernhill Park. I live across the street from
22 Fernhill Park. The bottom of the Fernhill Park
23 is across the street from the SEPTA gas plant.
24 And I came at the last minute. Charles Best was
25 supposed to be here is not here.

1 So, I am speaking to you today as a
2 resident.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Surely.
4 You're welcome.

5 MS. LANCASTER: I apologize for my
6 outfit. For disclosure, I work at the CROC
7 Center across the street from the SEPTA depot.
8 But I must say for the record, I do not
9 represent the CROC Center.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay. We
11 appreciate your interest, quite frankly, and
12 your willingness to show up as citizen.

13 State your full name. Did you give us
14 your full name?

15 MS. LANCASTER: Rhonda Lancaster.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.
17 Thank you.

18 MS. LANCASTER: So anyway, thank you for
19 the hearings today, and glad that I could be a
20 part racing down the last minute.

21 So, I have been involved with the
22 campaign for, you know, not having the gas
23 plant, per se, at the Midvale Depot because it
24 is so close to everything. It's close to my
25 job, near my house, my neighbor's homes. I said

1 I been there 42 years. Came there as a teenager
2 with my family. And to see just coming to our
3 community is very troubling. There are a number
4 of reasons I will not get into right now.

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: We thank
6 you for that. We do want to honor the clock.

7 MS. LANCASTER: Sure. That's what I'm
8 trying to do. But the residents in the area
9 where I live, which is at the top of Fernhill
10 Park, are very upset about this. We don't want
11 the issues that come with a gas plant to invade
12 our neighborhood.

13 Someone was speaking about trees before.
14 We had an aggressive, ten years ago, tree
15 campaign. It started with my house on the
16 corner. I was the first person with three trees
17 on my property, on my mother's property where
18 she was living at the time. And everybody
19 pretty much followed suit. We have been able to
20 educate people. And those that have moved out,
21 passed on into the next generation about the
22 importance of having trees.

23 So to me, it is hypocritical to have an
24 aggressive tree planting program but smokestacks
25 that are shooting pollutants into the air to

1 destroy them. We have a park that has
2 historical value. We have a house inside the
3 park that was the model for the first White
4 House when Philadelphia was a capital of
5 Washington, DC. Those things are at risk to be
6 destroyed or be degraded, I think is the word I
7 want to use, in term of pollution because you
8 cannot control how the winds blow.

9 Now I want to add this to it. I have
10 taken upon the task myself to speak to someone
11 at the National Weather Service and also the
12 National Weather Channel. Both entities have
13 concluded that -- again, I'm not going to get
14 into any legal stuff. They have concluded it's
15 not a good idea because you can't control which
16 way the wind blows. But we do know that the
17 wind blows from west to east. It's follows the
18 jet stream.

19 So here we are in the middle of all of
20 this, and we just don't know. And then when you
21 talk about the human factor, we already know
22 this area has a high rate of asthma with
23 children and the elderly. I have neighbors that
24 suffer from asthma. I have a whole generation
25 of family across the street from me. They have

1 had asthma from the person that's my age all the
2 way down to the great grandchildren who now have
3 asthma. So, this kind of thing compounds those
4 kind of issues.

5 And then there are other issues. We
6 don't know how it's going to affect our water
7 supply. We don't know how it's -- it's a lot.
8 It's a involved with this. But overall, I can
9 just say from a community standpoint, we don't
10 want the gas plant.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Let me
12 just pose a couple questions.

13 MS. LANCASTER: Sure.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Have you
15 attended any of the community meetings where the
16 designated parties have had a chance to talk
17 about the technologies that come with addressing
18 some of these legitimate concerns you have
19 raised?

20 MS. LANCASTER: What I have attended is
21 the L&I hearings.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.
23 Okay.

24 MS. LANCASTER: I only found out about
25 this a year ago. That's when I met Philly 350

1 and everybody else. Prior to that, I did not
2 know. That seems like I was the first one.
3 When I talk to people in my community, nobody
4 knew about it.

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: What would
6 the recommendation be that the interested
7 parties do a better job of informing, alerting?
8 I'm old school. You do leaflet dropping and you
9 knock on doors and you let folks know the
10 community meeting is happening. Internet
11 doesn't get people there all the time.

12 MS. LANCASTER: Right.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: And
14 particularly seniors who care, but not on the
15 internet.

16 MS. LANCASTER: Right.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: So, what
18 would be your recommendation as an active
19 citizen to those designated parties on how
20 better to inform residents that this proposal is
21 up for consideration? What would be your
22 recommendation?

23 MS. LANCASTER: Okay. Well, what I am
24 doing on my end is going into some streets in
25 the area where people do not even know this is

1 happening.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You are
3 knocking on doors or dropping off lit?

4 MS. LANCASTER: I'm talking to point
5 people. I call them in these particular blocks.

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

7 MS. LANCASTER: We are in the process so
8 far of setting up meetings so that people can
9 know. We are also trying to coordinate with
10 39th Police District so that people on the
11 borderline of Nicetown are aware of this.

12 Because we have another issue. That is the butt
13 plant has just been sold. And the CROC Center
14 sits on one part of that large parcel.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I'm aware.

16 MS. LANCASTER: I won't get into all
17 that.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.
19 It's helpful to put those type of
20 recommendations on the record. Because there
21 is -- there's some benefit in group think.

22 MS. LANCASTER: Yes.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: And
24 parties will, as Councilwoman Bass mentioned,
25 will be watching the testimony on Channel 64 and

1 may so be enlightened to follow your
2 recommendation so that there is greater -- so
3 that the awareness at the community level
4 happens in a more compounded way.

5 MS. LANCASTER: Can I just --

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: One last
7 thing and you are up to six minutes.

8 MS. LANCASTER: One last thing. That's
9 part of the problem. We don't have a
10 coordinated effort.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: And so,
12 guess what, you have been tagged.

13 MS. LANCASTER: Uh-oh. Okay. All right
14 I used to work in politics. I can handle it.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: This is
16 not just -- in fact, this is less than politics.

17 MS. LANCASTER: Yeah, I know.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: It's about
19 community engagement around an issue that is
20 going to make a difference in people's lives.
21 Put politics, throw that out the window.

22 MS. LANCASTER: I was just saying, I a
23 the little background in it.

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: This is
25 activism --

1 MS. LANCASTER: Absolutely.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: -- at the
3 fundamental level. Don't complain about it, be
4 about it. Tag, you're it.

5 MS. LANCASTER: Okay. Thank you,
6 Councilwoman.

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You're
8 welcome. Thank you all very, very, very much.

9 Next panel: Mitch Chanin, 350
10 Philadelphia, welcome; Meenan Raval, Reval --
11 correct me when you get to the witness table;
12 Lynn Robinson, Neighbors Against the Gas Plant;
13 and Alex Lola of Penn Environment.

14 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

15 MR. CHANIN: Thanks very much for the
16 opportunity to testify today. My name is Mitch
17 Chanin. I serve on the steering committee of
18 350 Philadelphia, which is a grass roots
19 organization dedicated to pushing for a rapid
20 and just transition from all fossil fuels
21 including coal, oil and natural gas to renewable
22 energy in order to protect a liveable climate.

23 I really appreciate so much of the
24 testimony that's been offered today. I'm in
25 full agreement and support of the

1 recommendations that have been made. I did want
2 to offer very quickly an additional perspective
3 from what Rhonda was saying.

4 I don't think the issue right now that's
5 facing us is informing people better about the
6 gas plant. The issue is that people want the
7 gas plant not to operate, and for the permit to
8 be revoked. So, that wasn't going to be the
9 main purpose of my testimony, but I did want to
10 offer that.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Seize the
12 moment.

13 MR. CHANIN: We really appreciate the
14 work that the Office of Sustainability and that
15 Philadelphia Energy Authority are doing. But
16 350 Philly, we have a very deep concern that the
17 targets that the City has adopted are not
18 adequate. There has been a lot of helpful
19 reference to some of the recent climate reports
20 that have been issued. The City's goal to
21 reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by
22 2050 is not consistent with the Paris Climate
23 Agreement. It is not consistent with the goal
24 of limiting global warming to 2 degrees, and
25 especially not 1.5 degrees Celsius.

1 The Office of Sustainability's Powering
2 the Future Report acknowledges that. It says,
3 quote, to avoid the worst causes of climate
4 change -- I'm sorry, worst consequences of
5 climate change, scientists are increasingly
6 concluding that global emissions must follow an
7 even faster trajectory. And it says elsewhere,
8 climate science increasingly suggest we must
9 work globally to cut carbon emissions as fast
10 and as far as possible. But despite that
11 acknowledgment, the 80 by 50 goal as far as I
12 understand is still the basis for setting policy
13 in the City of Philadelphia. And I'm not aware
14 that there's any plan to update that goal.

15 I would ask that the City conduct a full
16 assessment based on science about what goal is
17 appropriate. And then create a new target based
18 on that goal and then create climate protections
19 plans consistent with that goal. In Manchester
20 in the UK, the City government collaborated with
21 universities to do a rigorous assessment. They
22 concluded that for them the appropriate goal was
23 to zero out carbon emissions completely within
24 20 years. And I hope that the City of
25 Philadelphia will adopt a goal similar to that.

1 I wanted to just finish by saying it may
2 seem that transitioning that quickly is not
3 politically feasible. It may seem that
4 transitioning that quickly is not politically
5 feasible. But I think the fundamental problem
6 is we are choosing goals based on what appears
7 to be feasible politically rather than what is
8 absolutely necessary.

9 There is a growing call across the
10 country for so-called green new deal, which
11 would be a massive federally funded and
12 coordinated effort to transition to a hundred
13 percent renewable energy, to rebuild
14 transportation systems buildings and food
15 systems in a period of a little more than a
16 decade.

17 Recently, earlier this month Congress
18 member Elect, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who
19 represents parts of the Bronx and Queens
20 introduced or put forward a resolution to form a
21 house select committee for a green new deal.
22 That resolution is calling for creating a
23 committee that would take one year to write
24 legislation to accomplish the goals that I
25 suggested. And it includes some other real

1 visionary and critically important revisions
2 calling for a guarantee living wage job for
3 every US resident who wants one. And for
4 climate policies to mitigate deeply entrenched
5 racial regional and gender-based inequalities in
6 incumbent wealth.

7 I am asking the Councilmembers
8 individually and perhaps Council as a group
9 express support for the Green New Deal
10 resolution. It now has 15 sponsors in Congress.
11 If we can reach a critical mass, then that
12 committee will be created. And it will spend a
13 year writing the legislation that we actually
14 need that would make it possible for cities like
15 Philadelphia to achieve the goals that are
16 actually consistent with what science and
17 justice demands. I hope that Councilmembers
18 will consider expressing support for the Green
19 New Deal Resolution and conveying that to
20 Congressman Boyle and to Congressman Evans and
21 to Congresswoman Elect Mary Gay Scanlon.

22 So, thanks very much.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You are
24 very, very, very welcome, Mitch Chanin. I have
25 a little comment after we get through all of the

1 testimony. Don't go anywhere.

2 Okay. Please.

3 MS. RAVAL: Okay.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Now,
5 Meenal, I know that you can talk for 24 hours --

6 MS. RAVAL: No. No. No.

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You live
8 and breath -- let me make my point. You live
9 and breathe this stuff along with Mitch and Alex
10 and Matt and Eliza and others, okay.

11 I'm asking you to be mindful of the time
12 because we have three more panels, okay? And I
13 want to hear from everybody, okay?

14 Very well.

15 MS. RAVAL: First, did you know it was
16 78 degrees here?

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Well, there's
18 a lot of hot air in here.

19 MS. RAVAL: Second, when Pratima
20 mentioned transition plan for PGW, I have
21 offered testimony to the Philadelphia Gas
22 Commission on the subject. She didn't know that
23 maybe. And I am going to speak anecdotally.
24 But almost every sentence I say is a policy
25 suggestion.

1 What is the most pressing environmental
2 issue facing us? Some seem to think it's litter
3 or stormwater or air quality. But these are all
4 symptoms of the global climate crisis and our
5 addiction to fossil fuels. And it seems we have
6 only ten to twelve years to kick our habit.

7 Some say we, the public, haven't shown
8 enough outrage about the IPCC report. The
9 report that alerts us to this ten to twelve-year
10 timeline. Some say we, the environmental
11 groups, are too polite and rational. So, I
12 would like to state we are indeed enraged and
13 outraged and yes fearful for all of our futures.
14 That people come to us asking what we should be
15 doing. So those of leading the climate movement
16 in Philadelphia, people like me and Mitch, know
17 that we are in this for the long haul. And that
18 we need to remain calm and help solve the crisis
19 we have gotten ourselves into. That's why
20 you're not seeing outrage.

21 So, what are fossil fuels? We have
22 heard of coal, oil and gas. I would also like
23 to say the derivatives, which are gasoline,
24 diesel and plastics. How do we use them? Most
25 visible are our cars, trucks and buses by

1 burning gasoline or diesel. Not so visible is
2 the equipment in our basements, the boilers
3 furnaces and water heaters. Also invisible are
4 the distant power plants that burn coal, oil and
5 gas to generate electricity.

6 So, how do we get off of fossil fuels?
7 That's what we need to do. We need to decide to
8 stop spending on anything that uses fossil
9 fuels. We can do this each time we make a
10 decision, which is what you all do every day.
11 This means planning for every new car, truck and
12 bus that's sold to be electric starting today.
13 Not just the City's fleet but every car, truck
14 and bus including SEPTA.

15 It means when the boiler goes out on the
16 cold morning, everyone knows that the oil or gas
17 boiler will be replaced with an electric option,
18 whether it's our homes or our schools or
19 workplace, the homeowner, the contractor and the
20 utility, all of us need to be aware of and
21 repeat the same message. Today contractors are
22 insisting and telling us that gas options are
23 better even when the decision maker is asking
24 for an electric option. And when the hot water
25 tank springs a leak in the basement the same, we

1 have to opt for electric option.

2 When there is talk of subsidizing a
3 limping refinery or partnering to liquefy
4 natural gas, the decision is simple, we just say
5 no. It means planning for municipally-owned
6 utility, PGW transition away from selling gas,
7 another fossil fuel to doing something else.

8 People say like what? It could be
9 installing geothermal projects. Dave came up
10 with that. It could be air sealing and
11 insulating all our buildings in the City. It
12 could be replacing all gas appliances with
13 electric ones. We will find a way together
14 otherwise we are all in deep water. And that's
15 a little climate humor.

16 Next up plastics. Though not directly
17 contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, most
18 of the plastics we use and dispose of ends up in
19 our air because most of our trash gets
20 incinerated, people here, in our zero landfill
21 goal or ends up in our waterways from the
22 Wissahickon Creek to the Schuylkill River to the
23 Atlantic Ocean.

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Yes.

25 MS. RAVAL: Plastic is choking off all

1 life. So, they are very useful for things like
2 eyeglasses, we need to curtail the use of the
3 used ones and throw aways plastic. Things like
4 forks and spoons, takeout containers, plastic
5 bags and disposable water bottles. So, I'm
6 going to be working with Councilman Squilla on
7 that one.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Yeah.

9 MS. RAVAL: Start with the water cooler
10 there. We are going to get City water here.

11 You may ask, how are we going to fund
12 this effort? Every day I get letters about
13 another institution divesting by shifting funds
14 invested in fossil fuel companies to clean
15 energy companies to issuing green bonds,
16 something the City can do to setting up a public
17 bank, something else the City can do.

18 This sounds like an insurmountable task,
19 I realize that. But I am living proof it can be
20 done. I live in an all electric house with an
21 electric bike and an electric car. And it's all
22 charged by the soon-to-be installed solar panels
23 on my roof, all emitting greenhouse gases, all
24 emissions free. If only the bus I road to get
25 here today was also electric.

1 That's you all. (Points to SEPTA
2 representative.)

3 Perhaps we need to create a new
4 committee here. Say the committee on the
5 climate crisis. This could parallel the house
6 select committee on the federal level begin lead
7 by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortes.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Meenal, if
9 I give you ten minutes, I have to give everyone
10 ten minutes.

11 MS. RAVAL: Who wants to step up to
12 this? There is no committee person here to ask.
13 Who wants to step up to this committee on the
14 climate crisis? We can come up with one
15 climate-related policy each week to deliberate
16 over. The physicians say we need to act. The
17 scientists say we need to act. Yesterday even
18 learned that the lawyers -- I met with the bar
19 association. They said we need to act.

20 Let's focus and let's do it.

21 Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Let us
24 please hear from Lynn Robinson and Alex Lola and
25 then I will have comments.

1 Good afternoon.

2 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon. Thank
3 you so much for holding this hearing. I would
4 like to request a second hearing in January,
5 which has more notice for the public, maybe a
6 month's notice, so that, you know, we can have
7 more participation.

8 Okay. I sent in a laundry list of
9 recommendations, but many of the people here
10 have already said a bunch of stuff. I have less
11 to say for right now.

12 Okay. Regardless of the science beliefs
13 of our City's Mayor, Philadelphia's legislative
14 branch needs to reject any further fossil fuel
15 influence. This means if City Council accepts
16 climate science, it must also accept the science
17 of natural gas which is a fossil fuel. That
18 science has been obscured by gas lobbyists who
19 talk about gas burning cleaner than coal and oil
20 at the burning site. But what they don't talk
21 about is the methane leakage all across the
22 process which makes natural gas the most warming
23 of all fossil fuels. It is the worst for
24 climate change, natural gas.

25 And natural gas is being pushed all over

1 the country -- I'm sorry, all over the state and
2 the country and into Philadelphia. The only
3 methane that people should burn is a naturally
4 occurring methane build up, for example, in
5 methane formation in landfills and water
6 treatment plants. We can't avoid those
7 buildups. They need to be burned. When you
8 burn methane, it creates carbon dioxide, which
9 is less warming to the atmosphere.

10 Council needs to see that there's no
11 safe thing -- I'm sorry, there is no such thing
12 as a safe or benign project which burns as
13 fossil fuel or manipulates toxic and flammable
14 chemicals. You don't want to run anything
15 except an electric car in a locked garage.
16 Breathable air for people is about 4 miles up.
17 Therefore, we should realize that gravity is
18 keeping the air in, and it's tighter than a
19 locked garage. Therefore, we should sound the
20 alarm if an additional polluting project is
21 proposed in our limited space and find ways to
22 shut down existing ones. Any new polluting
23 project, must at this point in history, require
24 a needs assessment to be deemed necessary for
25 the common good, and then face a true and

1 intelligent alternative assessments which finds
2 a non-burning, non-toxic method for
3 accomplishing the project goal.

4 Alternative assessments unlike the one
5 done for SEPTA's gas plant in Nicetown, needs to
6 look at practical and possible systemic changes
7 over the long term to accommodate the
8 alternative path. That includes the projected
9 costs of improvement or erosion of public health
10 and resulting economic stability and instability
11 in the long term.

12 In Philadelphia, City Council needs to
13 transfer PGW so that's it's mandated to shift
14 from natural gas to non-burning technologies for
15 heating homes and buildings. People have talked
16 about this here. It's going to need a new name.
17 We also -- I was going to propose we have a City
18 Council Office of Sustainability at the
19 legislative level. I don't know if it should be
20 called that. But there should be another body
21 other than the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.
22 Because the Mayor's perspective may not match
23 what the legislature needs to do.

24 The most urgent priority for PGW is to
25 seal its network of profusely leaking methane

1 pipes, and it should abandon expansion of
2 natural gas infrastructure including the influx
3 of minor and synthetic minor natural gas
4 projects throughout the City, that is also --
5 that is the L&G proposal we have talked about
6 and also SEPTAs six proposed gas plants, one of
7 which is in Nicetown. One of which is built.
8 And there is five others in a list that they
9 would like to do.

10 We also hope that you will rethink
11 replacing oil burners in schools with natural
12 gas burners. That's a fossil fuel, and that's
13 the proposal. That is not sustainable. We need
14 electric running HVAC systems in the schools.
15 Okay.

16 So, I just want to end with SEPTA's gas
17 plant since I am the director of the Neighbors
18 Against Gas Plant, whose major mission is to
19 stop the one in Nicetown. SEPTA's Chip Project
20 is an example of City Council being led by slick
21 talk to let an unethical polluting project slide
22 past. Whatever the past tense reasons, none of
23 that matters now unless you still refuse at this
24 point to see the mistake. Philadelphia has the
25 nation's highest childhood mortality rate. And

1 among major Cities, is the worst asthma capital.

2 SEPTA's natural gas power plant in
3 Nicetown is that extra drop in the bucket of
4 environmental racism. Nicetown and part of
5 Central North Philadelphia next to it has the
6 City's highest cancer and mental disease rates,
7 lowest accessibility to walking and green spaces
8 and second highest childhood asthma
9 hospitalization rate. Nicetown has high air
10 toxicity levels coming from a mix of regular
11 street traffic, Route 1 traffic, SEPTA's largest
12 diesel bus depot, diesel burning crude oil
13 trains, a crematorium, et cetera.

14 There are 37,000 people, thirteen
15 schools within a mile radius countless daycare
16 centers, churches and their schools. Seven
17 hundred SEPTA employees work and often sleep
18 overnight between shifts on the property next to
19 this new polluting plant. And that's why the
20 Transport Workers Union has come out in favor of
21 our appeal to revoke SEPTA's air permit.

22 Please, find a way to admit the error.
23 This is a City government error. It's needs to
24 be admitted. It's a mistake. And please, shut
25 the project down.

1 Thank you.

2 (Applause.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you
4 for your testimony.

5 Alex Lola, Penn Environment.

6 MR. LOLA: Hi. Thank you so much for
7 having me here to speak today. I really
8 appreciate it. I am going to be speaking or
9 reading a letter on behalf of a coalition that
10 is formed of environmental groups and
11 individuals in the area that are opposed to the
12 proposed liquified natural gas plant in South
13 Philly.

14 We submitted this letter to Philadelphia
15 City Council as well as to Philadelphia Gas
16 Commissioners and Mayor Kenney just yesterday
17 afternoon.

18 (Letter) Dear members of City Council,
19 Gas Commissioners and Mayor Kenney, we are
20 writing to you to voice our opposition to PGW's
21 recently proposed liquified natural L&G public
22 private partnership at its Passyunk plant in
23 South Philadelphia. This proposal was projected
24 to allow PGW to liquefy, store and transport up
25 to 2.7 billion cubic feet of gas annually.

1 Bringing new fossil fuel projects online make it
2 harder for Philadelphia to do its fair share to
3 halt climate change, which is its greatest
4 environmental threat in facing the world and our
5 City today. We are disappointed that such a
6 proposal is being put forth, particularly on the
7 heels of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on
8 Climate Change report. The world's leading
9 climate scientists are warning there are less
10 than a dozen years in which to act to avoid the
11 worst affects of climate change, including
12 widespread drought, devastating floods, extreme
13 heat and poverty for millions of people.

14 IPCC scientists wrote that global
15 warming pollution must be cut by 45 percent by
16 2030 and to zero by 2050. Natural gas is part
17 of the problem, not the solution. The problem
18 is counter to the City's commitment to Paris
19 Climate Agreement, and to reduce greenhouse gas
20 emissions by 80 percent by 2050 compared to 2006
21 levels. Already, Philadelphia's Powering the
22 Future Report acknowledge we need a faster
23 timeline for abandoning fossil fuels and
24 reducing our global warming emissions.

25 Many of the negative effects of climate

1 change have already begun to plague our nation
2 and our region, including Hurricane Florence and
3 Michael, record breaking fires in California and
4 heat waves that forced early school dismissals
5 in Philadelphia public schools at the start of
6 this school year. It is imperative that we take
7 decisive action now to halt climate change.

8 The review process for the proposed L&G
9 project has appeared fast tracked with little
10 attention to adequate public notification and
11 input. A controversial project like this should
12 allow for more time to comment, not less. We
13 owe it to our children, our grandchildren and
14 the planet to address climate change with urgent
15 and focused priority.

16 We call on Members of Philadelphia's
17 City Council to extend the timeline for
18 reviewing this proposal, including public input
19 opportunities until after City Council has held
20 a Public Hearing about the pathway for PGW to
21 get completely off of fossil fuels and until the
22 City has fully analyzed how PGW can do so. This
23 extension would allow the public time to give a
24 just proposal and voice their concerns about the
25 project.

1 Second, we urge City Councilmembers to
2 vote no on this project if and when it comes to
3 you for review. We look forward to hearing from
4 you on this important issue as soon as possible.

5 Sincerely, 350 Philadelphia, Clean Air Council,
6 Clean Water Action, Delaware Water Keeper
7 Network, Green Justice Philly, Meenal Raval,
8 Mom' Clean Air Force PA Chapter, Neighbors
9 Against the Gas Plant, Penn Environment, Philly
10 Thrive, Physicians For Social Responsibility,
11 Philadelphia Chapter, Power, and Sierra Club
12 Southeastern PA group.

13 Thank you very much.

14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: That's
16 what you call coalition building. It matters and
17 it makes a difference. I need to say first of
18 all, your authentic enthusiasm and interest and
19 intellect around these issues is quite admirable
20 and very much appreciated.

21 Secondly, to Mitch, congratulation for
22 being recognized by the Clean Air Water action.
23 Where are you? Kudos to you. Meenal, you all
24 should know, has been nominated for Philly
25 Sustainability Award. Is she not deserving?

1 The answer would be yes. So, we certainly hope
2 that you get that.

3 Lynn Robinson, your continued monitoring
4 of the Nicetown gas plant effort matters. And
5 so, you need to know that we are paying
6 attention because you are paying attention.
7 Okay. Really.

8 And then again to Alex, to list off the
9 coalition that includes grass roots as well as
10 those who live and breath this on an
11 intellectual level. It really, really does
12 matter and make a difference. You have given us
13 multiple assignments. Let me repeat that. You
14 have given us multiple assignments. There are
15 17 of us, okay? Not all 17 care about this
16 issue. Let me just be clear.

17 Not all -- because there are 17
18 different uniquely different professionals who
19 come with different life experiences. And so,
20 we have to gather and get those we can get, and
21 the others will come kicking and screaming.
22 That's okay. That's the way kids are, right?
23 You got to bring them along kicking and
24 screaming. So, we have to continue to be
25 vigilant and repeating ourselves on why moving

1 away from fossil fuels is not about tomorrow.
2 It's really about now and other related issues
3 that you have talked about. So, know that my
4 staff and I are paying attention. And while we
5 have our legislative agenda carved out for us
6 from September of last year through June of next
7 year, because that's the way we do business in
8 my office. You have given us some additional
9 opportunities for this committee come January
10 and February of next year.

11 Thank you all very, very, very much.

12 Okay. Now if we could call up Maurice
13 Sampson, Clean Water Action; Breana Hashman,
14 Clean Water Action; Tammy Murphy, Physicians for
15 Social Responsibility; Walter Tsou, Physicians
16 for Social Responsibility. Again, we ask that
17 you do all you can to hold to the average -- let
18 me say this. The average amount of time our
19 witnesses have been is now up to five minutes.
20 So if we can get it back down to three minutes,
21 we will end on target.

22 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: All right
24 then. Thank you very much.

25 Good afternoon.

1 MR. SAMPSON: Good afternoon.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Welcome
3 back.

4 MR. SAMPSON: Thank you. It's always
5 good to be back. I felt sometimes like I live
6 here. I am going to try a two-minute drill.
7 Let's see what we can do.

8 My name is Maurice Sampson. The 129
9 West Gorgas Lane. I'm the Eastern Pennsylvania
10 Director for Clean Water Action. I want to
11 speak ever so briefly on four topics.

12 First, lead. Lead is found everywhere.
13 It's in paint. It's in soil. It's in plumbing.
14 It's in our homes, our schools, the dust from
15 demolitions, even in toys purchased at the
16 Dollar Store. Ignorance is the single greatest
17 reason for lead poisoning. If you understand
18 and know where lead is in your life, like a hot
19 stove, you can avoid it. For all the things
20 that we are doing and must do at the
21 legislation, what we need to do is let people
22 become aware. Because if they are aware, they
23 can avoid being poisoned.

24 We have working with the Water
25 Department, funding from the William Penn

1 Foundation over last year, have engaged in a
2 project where we intend to talk to a 20-minute
3 presentation based on that flyer that you have.
4 And we want to talk to everybody because we need
5 them to understand what is going on. We are
6 losing generations to the damage that is done by
7 lead and that can stop.

8 We are currently working with
9 Councilwoman Bass, Parker and Councilman Squilla
10 on doing an outreach campaign that we are going
11 to schedule programs through the whole year that
12 are in their districts. And we want to invite
13 other Council people to join that so we can get
14 the word out. In time, people will talk about
15 how to avoid lead on buses and subways. When
16 that happens, our campaign will have succeeded.

17 Recycling. Recycling is in trouble more
18 so than any of us understand. The issue of
19 contamination cannot be overstated. While we
20 have the opportunity to address this issue and
21 let me make -- let me be clear about this, the
22 Streets Department has probably one of the best
23 collection networks ever, but they do not have
24 the expertise to look at this. Right now in a
25 room across the way, there is a whole room of

1 people in the advisory committee who basically
2 get entertained and are never asked any
3 questions. You are going to surely be getting
4 contracts for recycling and for wastes. You
5 need to find out what those experts in the room
6 have to say because no one is asking us.

7 I'm also pleased to announce that Clean
8 Water Action in cooperation with the Mural Arts
9 Academy have been working over the last six
10 months. And we are going to launch a public
11 campaign in support of legislation to
12 incentivize the use of reusable shopping bags.

13 We've been working with the Mayor's Zero
14 Waste and Litter cabinet and Councilman Squilla
15 as the third leg in a three-legged strategy.
16 The bill in development, it will ban plastic
17 bags, assure everyone that needs to get a bag
18 can get one, and reward those that bring a bag.
19 It's not a bag ban. This is a reuse incentive
20 act. Stay tuned in the new year for more
21 details.

22 The most important issue you will
23 consider, I would submit, in the time that I
24 would submit perhaps even in your career when it
25 comes to environment, is going to be on the

1 liquified natural gas plant scheduled for
2 Passyunk. This is an issue of public policy.
3 City Council holds the key. If we are serious
4 about this plant, we can't allow it to be built.
5 There is no future for fossil fuel
6 infrastructure. We need a solid plan that moves
7 to us renewables, one that calls for rapid
8 transition that protects the poor and builds the
9 economy. We are going to have hearings. They
10 are going to be talking about the pluses and
11 minuses of the plant. It is a minus from the
12 beginning.

13 What City Council needs to do is to
14 figure out what happens, how do we get to
15 renewables. What do we do in a 35-year plan in
16 year three and four and five? We don't know.
17 We haven't had that discussion. If you pick one
18 of the -- if you pick this plan, it's not one
19 and the other. It's one or the other. Because
20 if you pick one, there will be no time for the
21 other. And given the circumstances of what we
22 know is happening in our climate, we will simply
23 be a player in bringing us down.

24 So, let's do the right thing. Let City
25 Council work on the policy. This is a policy

1 question. Let's talk about energy, and let's
2 talk about how we are going to get the kind of
3 energy that we need. I tell you, I think even
4 discussing the planet here is a colossal waste
5 of time.

6 Thank you. Four minutes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Good
8 afternoon. We will circle back with comments.

9 Breana Hashman.

10 MS. HASHMAN: I timed myself at three.
11 I will see. My name is Breana Hashman. I am a
12 geologist and currently a program manager at
13 Clean Water Action. I have a Bachelor's and
14 Master's degree in Geology. And began my
15 research career nine years ago. My expertise is
16 studying how life and earth interact together to
17 create environmental change on a planet wide
18 scale.

19 As both a geologist and environmental
20 activist, I am here to ask you to not fast track
21 approval of the proposed Passyunk L&G export
22 plan. This L&G plant represents a commitment
23 from the City to use natural gas for the next 25
24 years. When I first learned about natural gas,
25 research suggested that this fuel source could

1 produce 50 to 60 percent less carbon dioxide
2 emissions than coal. While I wanted stronger
3 protections for public health and the
4 environment, the climate implications made me
5 pro natural gas. Ten years later, when I
6 transitioned to environmental activism, I was
7 surprised to see how the state of research had
8 changed. While burning natural gas does produce
9 less carbon dioxide emission than coal, there
10 are also emissions of a stronger greenhouse gas
11 methane that leaks from pipelines and other
12 infrastructure. Research suggests these methane
13 leaks erase any climate benefit that natural gas
14 may hold over coal.

15 By focusing on the carbon dioxide to the
16 exclusion of methane, and ignoring greenhouse
17 gas emissions from every part of the production
18 line, the fossil fuel industries manipulating
19 figures make natural gas appear like a
20 sustainable fuel source. Climate science is not
21 a buffet. And treating the research this way
22 prevents consumers from making informed
23 decisions. If you accept climate science and
24 want to make decisions based on the holistic vie
25 of current scientific understanding, then you

1 can not simultaneously endorse long term
2 investments and natural gas infrastructure like
3 the Passyunk L&G export plant.

4 Advertisements in PGW and the
5 Philadelphia region tell you that natural gas is
6 a platform for renewable energy. These ads say
7 when the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't
8 blow, natural gas fills a gap. What they don't
9 mention that hydro power and batteries can also
10 fill this gap. It's in the interest for natural
11 gas interest groups and their partners to focus
12 on the perceived problems with renewable
13 energies while minimizing the risk of natural
14 gas, which is why these ads fail to tell us of
15 the cities around the world that are
16 successfully shifting towards 100 percent of
17 renewable energy right now without the need of a
18 dirty bridge fuel.

19 Philadelphia is listed as one of the top
20 ten most vulnerable U.S. cities of climate
21 change. And the most recent IPCC report has
22 made it clear that our society only has decades
23 to go a hundred percent renewable. Philadelphia
24 cannot afford to make long term commitments to
25 any type of fossil fuel. And we cannot afford

1 to delay the transition to renewable energies.
2 Our City has the potential to lead the charge in
3 restructuring the way we repower our society as
4 our nation deals with crumbling energy
5 infrastructure. The question is, will our
6 sustainable energy be transformation, be about
7 optics or real substantial change to the
8 climate?

9 Renewable energy features is
10 technologically and economically feasible. The
11 only thing we are missing is a lack of political
12 will. If we truly want to honor any pledge our
13 City has made to fight climate change, then
14 everyone in this room needs to fight to change
15 this political will today.

16 Thank you for giving me time.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you
18 very, very much, Breana Hashman. I think you
19 are the first geologist that's ever spoken,
20 given testimony here. Kudos.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Welcome
23 back. Welcome Dr. Tsou.

24 MR. LOLA: Hi. Thank you so much,
25 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown. My name is

1 Dr. Walter Tsou, I serves as Executive Director
2 of the Philadelphia Associates for social
3 responsibility. I have a longer three-page
4 testimony, which I entered for your
5 consideration. I'd like to first off
6 congratulate all the wonderful speakers before
7 me, including Maurice and Bre who articulated
8 much of what I would also like to say. I think
9 that I want to talk about three issues. One is
10 the SEPTA gas plant, which has already been
11 spoken about.

12 But in consideration of my own testimony
13 around the issue, what I realize is that the Air
14 Management Department which I used to run as the
15 health commissioner of this City and to my great
16 embarrassment, is going -- is permitting this
17 gas plant in part because it follows a very
18 narrow set of regulations that they use for
19 approval. We need to change the air code in the
20 City. And --

21 (Applause.)

22 We have to do this in the context of
23 climate change. We should insist that renewable
24 energy is a criteria and our first criteria for
25 permitting any energy producing facility in the

1 City. And only upon failure of why renewable
2 energy is not an adequate energy source, should
3 we actually even consider the next step of
4 whether we should permit a fossil fuel
5 generating facility.

6 The second thing that is true about the
7 SEPTA gas plant is that the Nicetown area has
8 the second highest asthma hospitalization rate
9 in the City. And yet, that is not a
10 consideration in the permitting process. And
11 this is a Health Department that is actually
12 allowing this gas plant to be built even though
13 they are ones collecting the asthma health
14 statistics. I find that as a formal health
15 commissioner, very embarrassing to admit. We
16 should not allow energy-producing facilities in
17 areas that all already heavy impacted by adverse
18 health statistics.

19 The second thing I want to mention is
20 two words for your consideration. And those
21 words are the "planned obsolescence." We have
22 heard much about the problems with climate
23 change in this room. And I believe that PGW and
24 Philadelphia Energy Solutions need to be planned
25 obsolescence. That is to say, they need to go

1 away. We need to change how we do energy in
2 this City, as we have heard. And Philadelphia
3 Gas Works, unfortunately for you, is under the
4 domain f City government. That's the bad news.
5 On the good news, though, is that it gives you
6 an opportunity to figure out over the next few
7 years how we are going to transition ourselves
8 from a PGW gas entity to one that actually
9 embraces signs for climate change and around
10 renewable energy.

11 And then finally, Philadelphia Energy
12 Solutions, which is the largest toxic emitter of
13 air pollution in the City of Philadelphia, is a
14 serious problem. They are the largest producer
15 of gasoline in the City in the east coast. And
16 we are moving to a world where going to have
17 more electric vehicles. Thank God. We need in
18 the City to think about how we are going to
19 embrace EVs, but we also have to plan for the
20 inevitable reduction of gasoline demand, which
21 means that we have to plan for Philadelphia
22 Energy Solutions eventual bankruptcy, and how we
23 are going to repurpose that area for something
24 that actually is valuable and useful for the
25 residents of the City. We can be leaders about

1 this or simply be victims of what are the
2 inevitable changes we are going to see about
3 climate change

4 Finally, let me say that there are some
5 energy solutions that we have not talked about
6 in this testimony up to now. Let's suppose we
7 are really bold and we said that all new
8 construction in the City has to have solar
9 panels and has to have geothermal wells as part
10 of the construction. And then hire people in
11 Philadelphia to do those construction tasks.

12 What would happen if we actually made a
13 deal with New Jersey and Delaware and said that
14 we are going to buy Title Energy? Yes, nobody
15 actually has Title Energy Solution right now,
16 but they are sitting on this ocean called the
17 Atlantic Ocean that has 24-hour power that's
18 being generated every day. And we could
19 actually, as a region, say we are going to help
20 solve this climate energy process by actually
21 buying this Title Energy from our neighbors.
22 And we could actually think of other creative
23 solutions where we can embrace the idea. You
24 have already done some in Adams County. We need
25 to expand that for all the businesses in the

1 City.

2 I won't go on because I would say that
3 there are other wonderful testimonies to hear.
4 But I would say that we need some bold
5 solutions. And this hearing is actually about
6 trying to think about bold solutions.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you,
9 Dr. Tsou. Please, if we can now ask Tammy
10 Murphy to join the witness table, Physicians for
11 Social Responsibility.

12 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

13 MS. MURPHY: Thank you for having me.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Oh,
15 absolutely. Pull the mic closer to you.
16 Identify yourself first.

17 MS. MURPHY: My name is Tammy Murphy.
18 I'm the Medical Director for Physicians for
19 Social Responsibility. I have submitted a
20 ten-page document. This is in regard to SEPTA's
21 proposed power plant in Nicetown. I know you
22 have heard a lot about it. The reason I gave a
23 ten-page document is to provide you with some
24 details and some resources. And I am happy to
25 meet with you and any Councilmembers interested

1 in going over this. And I can bring my friend
2 Walter Tsou here.

3 So the first part of it is the
4 consideration of cumulative impacts of total
5 environment in the area. So a few points. The
6 population is within three miles within the 90
7 percentile of low income and the 93rd for
8 minority populations in Pennsylvania. And it's
9 a very dense area. So, I'm not going to go over
10 all the details. I have here the Environmental
11 Justice Index Report that is available through
12 EPA. These are the details specifically for
13 that town.

14 On the next page is a map of the actual
15 location, just a regular Google Map of the
16 location. Underneath of that I have something
17 from Food and Water Watch. They have something
18 very recent about power plants. So, this
19 particular map is map number three from the Food
20 and Water Watch. This is showing the impact
21 community in terms of existing power plants.
22 Each of those green circles represents a 3-mile
23 radius. This is on the back of the first page.
24 And then the red areas are communities of color.
25 And then they have little sort of cross marks

1 for community struggling with income.

2 As you can see, the circle here, that is
3 where the proposed power plant would be. That
4 is in the midst of some of the most struggling
5 communities in our City that are already pretty
6 much surrounded by power plants and toxicity.
7 Adding that, is adding not only to the community
8 within the circle and all of the communities
9 around it that are already suffering from their
10 own power plants and their own sources of
11 toxicity. That is from Food and Water Watch.

12 The next map, as you turn the page, this
13 is the one with the blue. This has to do with
14 asthma rates in the City. Right there in
15 basically the center, you have the highest.
16 That mark is not actually in the exact zone
17 where this is going to be. It's pretty much
18 right next to it. But air pollution will
19 travel. So, we are talking about an area that's
20 highly impacted already. It's one of the
21 highest rates. And it's also surrounded by
22 other highest rates of asthma.

23 And then as you go down to the next map,
24 this is a map that's showing the area by race.
25 And the area with the red color is the Black

1 community. The area with sort of magenta is
2 majority White community. And the area towards
3 the bottom right of it is Latino community. The
4 exact area in the red is exactly where this
5 power plant is going to be, like, right in the
6 heart of the Black community in that area.

7 The next page is from the same source.
8 That is showing income levels. And this is the
9 same exact area also in red. So, this is
10 also -- this is not by race, but this is showing
11 the incomes. You are talking about some of the
12 most struggling in terms of impact. You have
13 the Black community of asthma. You have
14 multiple layers of existing struggles. And then
15 putting this power plant on top of it, we have
16 heard from many people, couple of the neighbors
17 here today talk about it. They don't want it.
18 They rejected it. And they haven't -- I don't
19 think they had adequate opportunity to speak
20 publicly about it or to be heard, to have their
21 voices heard about it. But we are trying to get
22 that out to hopefully we will have more of that.

23 They are building it. I mean, we don't
24 have the money to fight it with an injunction.
25 They are already building it. We are trying to

1 go through the appeals process. But the
2 community, even the environmental groups, we are
3 struggling to pay for lawyers in the appeal
4 process. We don't have the money for an
5 injunction. And so in the meantime, they are
6 building it. Once they build it, they are going
7 to say it's built. There's nothing we can do
8 about it. We don't have the money to stop it,
9 but you have the power. So hopefully, our voice
10 will bring you to step up to it.

11 The next section, Section Two, covers
12 air pollution impacts. This is just a quick
13 show of what the Nicetown community is already
14 dealing with: The traffic pollution, the fossil
15 fuel power plants that are already burning in
16 the area. And these are just a couple of
17 different ways. You go down to the body, areas
18 where it's impacted. We get into much more
19 detail when I have more than two minutes.

20 If you turn the page, it shows the
21 people that are most impacted, which basically
22 comes down to children, women, particularly
23 pregnant women and/or child bearing age, I
24 should say, and elderly communities. Those that
25 are already dealing with that are already immuno

1 compromised. The fine particles, basically in a
2 nutshell, cause shorter life. That's the number
3 one takeaway from it. But it's also learning
4 disabilities, Alzheimer's, depression, stroke,
5 autism, heart disease, asthma, lung cancer,
6 reduced lung function, obesity, birth defects,
7 low birth weight and diabetes. And I'm sorry to
8 say, that sounds like the warning signs of a
9 pharmaceutical ad. That's the kind of thing we
10 are dealing with. Putting this power plant into
11 this community is going to cause a whole host of
12 illnesses for the community.

13 And there is no -- it's an environmental
14 justice issue on so many ways, but people can't
15 choose the air that they breathe. There is
16 nothing they can do to get away from it. I
17 mean, there is really nothing. When you talk
18 about the woman that was here earlier, Ms.
19 Lancaster that was here, and she works over at
20 the CROC Center. Literally got a grant because
21 that -- there is no place for children to play
22 in that area. So they literally got a grant to
23 be built to be put in that community to give
24 people a place to exercise to fight obesity.
25 This is not only causing obesity, but this is

1 literally directly across the street from the
2 place that got a grant to give kids a place to
3 play and exercise. It's disgusting. You are
4 going to be polluting the place. It makes no
5 sense. This is directly across the street from
6 it, and there is nowhere else to play. So then,
7 Section Three specific data on natural gas power
8 plants. I won't go into all of them. Lists
9 some details about nitrogen oxide, particulate
10 matter, organic compounds, ultra fine
11 particulates. And there is a reason I went into
12 the details of the ultra fine particulate
13 matter. Because the EPA does not regulate ultra
14 fine particulate matter. This is particulate
15 matter that it controls. But ultra fine is less
16 researched I think. There are not restrictions.
17 We don't really have the time to wait for the
18 EPA to come around on this. But we are not
19 going to have the Trump Administration doing
20 anything about that to protect it.

21 We don't have time to wait for them. We
22 already know the damages. We can't wait for the
23 EPA to come around for it. We know that. It's
24 time for us to step up and make these
25 protections. And I think our environmental

1 amendment is enough to say we have protection
2 from this.

3 And then the last couple of things here
4 are just a couple of peer review medical
5 journals. Basically in 2012 talking about
6 increased rates of hospitalization. Basically,
7 coming from power plants. So that's asthma
8 acute respiratory infections and chronic
9 obstructive pulmonary disease commonly know as
10 COPD. Then in 2015, is talking about the
11 adverse birth outcomes that have to do with
12 correlations with power plants.

13 And then the last page is just some more
14 details about the danger of methane which I
15 think was adequately covered earlier in the
16 session. But also, I think is kind of an
17 interesting thing. If you look at the thing
18 that says where is your summer ahead. We are
19 set by 2100, we are set to have the temperature
20 of San Antonio, Texas in Philadelphia.

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Wow.

22 MS. MURPHY: We don't want that. And
23 then, so we have some energy sources, clean
24 energy, some positive things on the following
25 page that we can go over in more detail. And

1 the back page just has my information and PSR's
2 national information.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you,
4 thank you, thank you. I'm a former teacher. I
5 learn with visuals. This is an excellent,
6 excellent graphic presentation of a lot of the
7 written testimony that we have heard. I must
8 ask any and all of you, have you had a chance to
9 speak before any of the community meetings for
10 the Nicetown effort or the SEPTA public meetings
11 or the PGW board meetings.

12 MS. MURPHY: I spoke at the Steel
13 Elementary School when we spoke with SEPTA there
14 a couple years ago. I basically gave a very
15 similar presentation to this. And their
16 response was that air pollution goes up. That's
17 really what they had to say to my report.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Has the
19 coalition collectively reduced to writing the --
20 for all the reasons you've articulated quite
21 excellently in writing why either one in South
22 Philly, while I think is Councilman -- help me
23 out -- Kenyatta Johnson. And I know full well
24 Councilwoman Bass has been on top it in her
25 district. South Philly on that.

1 MR. SAMPSON: This whole issue on the
2 plant is happening now.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: The one in
4 South Philly?

5 MR. SAMPSON: Yeah. I think part of
6 what you are hearing is the time to even get
7 together to talk about it is barely there.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I see.

9 MR. SAMPSON: Part of the energy in
10 saying why this needs to be slowed down, we need
11 to not rush this decision. You know, they want
12 to build it in Philly. We are not going
13 anywhere. So, we don't have to make a decision
14 in January. We can wait a year. We need to
15 take the time to figure out what our policy
16 needs to be. What, are they going to build it
17 in Baltimore? I don't think so. It's going to
18 be here or they are not going to build it.

19 So, they need to wait while we have the
20 discussion and we decide what's best for
21 Philadelphia.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: What I
23 would like to commit to as a result of this
24 hearing is to have a very direct conversation
25 with the Administration, Julian, and then circle

1 back to all those who testified to, at least for
2 us to get a reading on where that is in the
3 process.

4 MR. SAMPSON: Absolutely.

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: But for
6 this hearing and because I don't live in South
7 Philly, we are focused on other things like
8 lead, I would not be aware of it.

9 MR. SAMPSON: They are going to come to
10 you after it goes through the next phase with
11 Gas Works Commission it comes to Council. It
12 needs Council's approval in order to happen. It
13 needs nine votes. It's going to come right on
14 your plate. And you will be the ones that
15 ultimately will decide. So, that is where the
16 discussion is really going to happen.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Still in
18 the formative state.

19 MR. SAMPSON: Well, actually, the way I
20 look at it is, you are the last step. And after
21 you have it --

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I'm not
23 going to dispute that. But the conversations
24 haven't reached to Council level yet. Sounds
25 like, can't speak for the Administration ever,

1 not on that side of the ledger, they are having
2 conversations and discussions. The Office of
3 Sustainability is not here. So, I am not privy
4 to the status or what juncture they are in those
5 conversations and discussions. But raising it
6 here is a green light for me to ask them more
7 questions about it.

8 MR. SAMPSON: I just want to add to that
9 one question. I haven't been speaking at these
10 hearings, but I've been going and listening
11 because the voices are really telling the story.
12 But I really heard at that meeting that was held
13 most recently, as the people want to build the
14 plant spoke, is that this is not just about a
15 million or a couple million in a year for
16 Philadelphia.

17 In order for them to succeed to do that,
18 they have to change all the forms of energy in
19 the City to fossil fuels. They have to all --
20 what they are going to do is build a plant that,
21 basically, will be here and store huge amount of
22 material. And we can look at cracker plants to
23 make plastics. We can look at turning all the
24 diesel to natural gas and get the particulate
25 matter.

1 This plant is about rebuilding a new
2 fossil fuel infrastructure. That's what it's
3 about. And that's what we have -- that's why I
4 say, you're going to be privy to here is the
5 plan and here is the pluses and minuses. I'm
6 saying you need to put that aside and say, what
7 kind of energy plan do we want for this City.
8 We have to make a policy decision before we can
9 start getting in the details. The details are
10 distracting. You are going to end up talking
11 about whether it's good or bad when it's all
12 bad. We need to talk about the policy first.
13 And that is City Council's job.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Well
15 taken. Let me say this. It's part of our job,
16 okay, because we have to do constituent service.
17 And there are a gazillion issues facing the
18 City. And the challenge for us always is with
19 all gazillion issues hitting us daily and the
20 time that we have, where do we prioritize all
21 that is coming before us. Again, but for this
22 hearing -- because my office has been focused on
23 lead --

24 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, ma'am.

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: But for

1 this hearing, I would not be aware of it because
2 I don't live in South Philly. So, that is why
3 hearings of this general nature are very, very,
4 very, very useful because they give us a chance
5 to hear all of what's happening within a
6 particular space. So, that is indeed very,
7 very, very, very helpful.

8 MR. SAMPSON: If I can make a comment --

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: We got to
10 move on.

11 MR. SAMPSON: Let me make a last
12 comment. My first involvement in energy
13 actually happened in the late '70s and '80s
14 after the energy crisis. One of the things I
15 learned in that experience is when you get the
16 energy part of the equation right, all of the
17 environmental issues come into focus.

18 Just like you said, we are dealing with
19 a whole lot of issues. The truth of the matter
20 is, we go away from fossil fuel and adopt the
21 right next of renewables. You are going to see
22 a whole lot of other problems dissolve from the
23 list. It's about getting the equation right.

24 Okay. Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You're

1 welcome. Thank you all.

2 Please, Audrey Williams, Philly Thrive;
3 Johannah Cordon Hill, Philly Thrive; Mark Yule,
4 Energy Justice Network; and Greg Palmier,
5 Neighbors Against the Gas Plant.

6 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: A friendly
8 reminder. We are going to try to honor the
9 clock. We are up -- Maurice Sampson, we are
10 going to lean on you to come back and testify
11 during our lead hearings and to bring -- this is
12 fabulous. It's outstanding done by Clean Water
13 Action Pennsylvania. It's outstanding.

14 In fact, we are going to send this to
15 Council colleagues before we have those
16 hearings.

17 Okay. Please, state your full name for
18 the record and offer your testimony.

19 MS. KIANY: Hello. My name is Audrey
20 Kiany. And I'm coming forth about -- I live in
21 South Philly myself. What I don't think most
22 people is aware of, living in South Philly,
23 these fumes are killing our children.

24 I have a son now in his prime, and now
25 he has cancer. My only child. I'm here begging

1 for the children, too. It's not only hurting
2 the adults, it's down to our kids. And
3 something needs to be done. I hear everybody
4 talk about it needs to be there. It needs to be
5 there. It needs to be away from the public
6 period. I know they can put underground or
7 something. That's what we need.

8 We in desperate need or help that can't
9 wait for maybe another ten years. Ten years
10 would be too late for a lot of children. And as
11 a mother, it hurts very much. And I would be
12 able to do anything and everything I can to
13 change things around. And I'm not the only one.

14 I'm here to speak to you also about the
15 surroundings.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: About
17 what?

18 MS. KIANY: Surroundings.

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

20 MS. KIANY: I live right up to near
21 Grays Ferry. And the things that's going on and
22 things they throw out is like we are one big
23 garbage can. We can throw anything there, and
24 they have to accept it.

25 We are tired of accepting it. We are

1 tired of being the way we are. We have a voice,
2 also. Because we are the ones who got to live
3 there. Why shouldn't we have number one voice
4 to say what can be there and what can't? We are
5 the ones that's suffering. And I hear everybody
6 say, well, maybe this is three years. Maybe
7 this is five years. We don't have that long.

8 We live near two schools. The children
9 come out there to play, to breathe. And we live
10 near a park. Half the time they can't come out
11 there. And this -- sometimes the fumes so
12 sickening, you could be in the house and smell
13 it. What do we have to live this way? We are
14 paying like anybody else. Why are -- we have
15 the whole bulk of everything?

16 This is not right. And I think we
17 should exercise our voice each and everywhere we
18 do. If we have to march in solidarity, we need
19 to do that. We are tired of being -- we can
20 pay. They can get that from us, but we can't
21 get nothing us for it. How long do we have to
22 go this way?

23 When is our voices going to be heard?
24 Do we have to march? Whatever we have to do.
25 Now we are marching for our children and for

1 their life. And I think everybody discussing,
2 well, we will do this. We can't hold on till
3 that long. We need action now. And I'm sorry
4 to get a little high, but this is getting to me.
5 We are not just a piece of paper with our name
6 on it, we are human beings. And now it's the
7 effecting the children.

8 That is too much.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I want to
10 ask you to please make sure you meet Mollie
11 Michel who is the President of the Philadelphia
12 chapter of Mom's Clean Air Force. If you can
13 connect with her before she leaves, because your
14 testimony is very much linked to their mission.
15 So, you want to make that connection before she
16 leaves.

17 Please next up, thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 MS. KIANY: Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Please
21 connect with Mollie before she leaves.

22 MS. CORDON HILL: Hi. I'm Johannah
23 Cordon Hill. I, along with Ms. Audrey, work
24 with Philly Thrive. We organize in South Philly
25 predominantly against the oil refinery that's

1 been referenced a few times. We really try to
2 center the voices of people who live nearby the
3 refinery. And I call on you to do the same in
4 any decision making, to center these voices.
5 I'm actually going to pass the rest of my time to
6 Ms. Carol.

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay then.

8 MS. WHITE: Hello.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Good
10 afternoon.

11 MS. WHITE: Good afternoon. My name is
12 Carol White. I'm also here for the very first
13 time. I'm also on the fence sign in South
14 Philadelphia. I live in Wilson Park. This is
15 the first time I got a chance to express how I
16 feel about the people that's dying around me.

17 About eight or nine people on my block,
18 just my block, passed away. And it's like I
19 been here for 15 years. I been hearing stories.
20 We had a meeting not too long about the
21 training, to how we can come to the board and
22 come to a training to come out and try to stop
23 this permit for these people to try get this
24 biogas across the street from my house. I have
25 three plants across the street from my house. I

1 got PGW and now they want to put a biogas across
2 the street from my house.

3 They have explosions. We have tankers
4 going past our homes. We also have -- we talk
5 about -- like my mother just passed from cancer.
6 When I was coming up, I'm 59, almost 60. And I
7 never seen so many cancer patients in my life.
8 I just went to eight funerals in the past month.
9 Since my mother passed in January, it's been
10 funeral after funeral after funeral.

11 It's really bothering me because I have
12 a lot of grandchildren and I have a lot of
13 children that comes to visit me. And every time
14 they do visit me, I be thinking sometimes I can
15 have my family members coming by my home,
16 accepting all these fumes and then taking it
17 back to their families, you know. So, we don't
18 know exactly what's going on. But I know I
19 would like for someone to come out and test the
20 waters.

21 You know, they have these sites they can
22 go and test and get things organized around the
23 fuels. When somebody going to come out and test
24 these fuels. Somebody going to put some type of
25 paper together or go to the ground and find out

1 where it is leaking from or what all the things
2 we are breathing. We don't know what we are
3 breathing. We are breathing too many different
4 things.

5 The rate is for my seniors. They live
6 in highrise. Their highrise do not have central
7 air. They have to leave their windows open in
8 order to get air. And exactly every like -- I
9 seen 15 or 20 seniors pass since I been out
10 there. I see you one day, the next okay you are
11 gone.

12 So, I just hope that everybody can come
13 together, all the organizations can come
14 together and come out to South Philadelphia.
15 Give us some type of something to look at.
16 Something to listen and someday we can have some
17 type of monitoring stations. They supposed to
18 came up. I remember going to the doctors. We
19 had a conference with the doctors and medical
20 team at the library. And I spoke there, also.

21 No one ever showed us they went out
22 there. They went to test the waters. Go and
23 live around this and see. Monitor something.
24 Let us know we are breathing. You know, I
25 actually get sick sometimes myself, you know.

1 And I have to go to the doctors every other --
2 every other, like, three months just to find out
3 how my breathing is.

4 I can't sleep at night. I have a
5 sleeping disorder now. I never had it before.
6 You know, this seems like it's -- the more and
7 more we come about taking our seniors out to
8 different meetings that we have -- we have town
9 hall meetings. We have surveys, you know.
10 Every -- you know, we have done that trying to
11 get people to come out and understand what we
12 are doing. We had 50 persons that came out to
13 our training. And some people said we never
14 knew that.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Let me ask
16 a question. Has the Philadelphia Water
17 Department attended those meetings?

18 MS. WHITE: No.

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Have the
20 Water Department been approached in writing to
21 ask them to come out and test the water.

22 MS. WHITE: That will you be our second
23 step.

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I would
25 urge you to submit a former letter to the

1 commissioner of the Philadelphia Water
2 Department. I do know that they come out to
3 community efforts. We had them for eight
4 consecutive Fridays at senior citizen centers
5 around the City. So, that would be my
6 recommendation to the Water Department
7 Commissioner, the name of which you can get from
8 my staff. We are more than willing to lean on
9 and ask the commissioner -- copy our office.

10 MS. WHITE: Yes. Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You're
12 welcome Ms. White.

13 Mr. Mark -- forgive me, Mike Ewell.
14 Please pronouns.

15 MR. EWELL: Mike Ewell.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.
17 Very well. Energy Justice Network. Welcome.

18 MR. EWELL: Thank you. Thank you for
19 having me. So Charles, the senior policy
20 director for EPA Office of Environmental Justice
21 said that was the worst case of environmental
22 racism that he's ever seen. He was talking
23 about Chester, Pennsylvania just southwest of
24 us. They among many other polluting industries
25 host the nation's largest trash incinerator,

1 which is the largest single destination for
2 Philadelphia's trash goes.

3 One of -- they are also one of the
4 largest air polluters in the whole five county
5 Philadelphia area. They are actually -- number
6 one is the PA Oil Refinery. The Airport is the
7 trash incinerator. They are also number three
8 in nitrogen oxides and top ten on global warming
9 gases as well in the whole five county area.
10 Philly is right downwind.

11 The nitrous oxides that they release,
12 trigger asthma attacks. Philadelphia has a
13 serious asthma problem, so does Chester. Asthma
14 is the leading cause of missed school days,
15 missed workdays, lost productivity. There are a
16 lot of other health effects. I will just focus
17 on the one for a moment here.

18 That incinerator has no controls for
19 nitrous oxides. Most have four pollutant
20 control devices in general. This one has two.
21 It's completely missing the ones that would
22 reduce the asthma problems we have. And to put
23 it in perspective, the nitrogen oxides being
24 kicked out of the one incinerator burning
25 Philly's trash is equal to 57 Nicetown gas power

1 plants. Just Philadelphia's portion of the
2 waste being burned there is equal to 16 Nicetown
3 gas power plants.

4 Now, we have an opportunity to do
5 something about it. We have a moral obligation
6 to do something about it. Incineration is the
7 most expensive and polluting way to manage
8 wastes or to make energy. For every hundred
9 tons of trash we burn, 70 tons become air
10 pollution. We end up breathing it. We are
11 using our lungs as our garbage disposal system.
12 The other 30 tons become highly toxic ash where
13 it still goes to landfill. The City maintains
14 it has a zero waste to landfill plan.

15 This is the highjacking of zero waste.
16 There is no such thing as zero waste to landfill
17 because you just make our lungs the first
18 landfill and you put toxic ash in the landfills
19 instead. It's actually worse than landfilling
20 to be burning our trash.

21 We are directly landfilling about
22 60 percent. But 40 percent of our trash that we
23 are burning in Chester and other places is a
24 serious health problem. It's even a climate
25 problem. Trash Incineration is two and a half

1 times as bad as coal burning for the climate in
2 terms of CO2 output. This is EPA's own data.

3 This is the largest air polluters in the
4 district. The trash incinerator in Chester is
5 the largest air polluter in Chester. Third
6 largest in the five-county area. We also use
7 the one in Plymouth in Montgomery County. That
8 incinerator is owned by the same company as the
9 largest air polluter in Montgomery County. We
10 also use the trash incinerator in my home
11 county. I'm originally from Bucks County in
12 Falls Township, a company called Wheel Rator.
13 It's the largest air polluter in Bucks County.
14 So, there is a trend here. We need to stop
15 sending our waste to incinerator.

16 The City -- meaning to be in a meeting
17 across the street that Maurice just dashed to.
18 They are talking about the waste contracts now.
19 But they are about to issue a request for
20 proposals for the next seven to ten years for
21 where Philly's trash is going to go. The
22 current contracts run out next summer. I've
23 been battling them just to get copies of the
24 current contracts. They are stonewalling me
25 saying these documents don't exist when they

1 clearly do. So, there is a right-to-know
2 problem I've been fighting, as well.

3 We need to have City Council lay down
4 the law and say no to any more incineration
5 contracts. Pennsylvania has a lot of landfill
6 space. I help fight landfills. Some of my
7 first fights I've ever been involved with. And
8 I understand how bad they are. But Incinerators
9 are worse. We have done a study on it. We know
10 they are worse by many different ways.

11 We have so much landfill space, we
12 actually are filling our landfills up with
13 out-of-state waste. And Pennsylvania has been
14 larger importer of out-of-state trash. Since
15 they started measuring it in the early nineties.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: What's the
17 alternative?

18 MR. EWELL: The alternative immediately
19 is to send waste directly to the landfills
20 instead of burning a lot of it first and then
21 sending them ash. They are not doing anyone a
22 favor by sending toxic ash to the landfills and
23 sending the rest of the trash into our lungs.
24 The real answer, of course, is doing zero waste.
25 Really genuine zero waste, which means no

1 burning and then a lot of different policy
2 options from getting curbside composting
3 collection, all the different thing. I can do a
4 whole talk on that. Let me just finish a few
5 points I have on this because I know my time is
6 limited.

7 The Conestoga Landfill in Berks County
8 is just one of many landfills in this region.
9 That one landfill, which we also use to some
10 degree, but they have five times the capacity
11 needed to talk all the waste, the 40 percent we
12 burn and send it there so we don't have to be
13 burning it and making a worse problem for
14 people.

15 The Streets Department has not been
16 open. The Procurement Department has also been
17 difficult to get the contract information. So,
18 I need help from City Council. We need City
19 Council to step in and say, we need a law pass
20 that sets criteria for where we are allowed to
21 send our waste. Ideally, say no burning. We
22 are not going to do that anymore. At a minimum,
23 the criteria said, we are not going to use
24 facilities that emit so much pollution. If you
25 set any criteria, incineration will be out

1 anyway.

2 The last point I will say, one of the
3 two contracts we have in addition to burning in
4 Chester and other trash incinerators is waste
5 management. They have a plant they built not
6 far from where I live in Northeast Philadelphia
7 in Holmesburg. They call it a spec fuel plant.
8 They are turning trash into trash pellets and
9 marketing that to places like cement kilns in
10 the Lehigh Valley to burn where they make
11 cement. Which is even filthier because they are
12 not designed to be burning trash. The trash
13 incinerators are filthy enough, but these are
14 even worse.

15 There is now a new plant in another
16 environmental justice issue for the City right
17 in Grays Ferry area next to Bartram Garden,
18 another company called Gold Metal want to set up
19 a shop to pelletize to give to places to burn.
20 We need to make sure we are keeping an eye on
21 that and not allowing that and not signing
22 contracts to do that.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You are an
25 investigator.

1 MR. EWELL: I am. I've been at this for
2 30 years.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I love it.

4 MR. EWELL: I am happy to supply all the
5 information.

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I love it.
7 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Ewell.

8 Greg Palmier. We're coming down on the
9 clock. We have 20 minutes left.

10 MR. PALMIER: Two minutes. Going to
11 take two minutes. Thank you, Councilwoman --

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: You are
13 welcome. And thank you for staying.

14 MR. PALMIER: -- Blondell Reynolds
15 Brown. Appreciate you having this hearing.
16 Appreciate the other Council people attending.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Yes.

18 MR. PALMIER: And I would like to -- I'm
19 a 60-year resident of Germantown. The past
20 democratic ward leader of the 12th Ward in
21 Germantown. And I would like to suggest that
22 the environment -- first of all, I want to agree
23 with everything that's been said. I am here
24 opposing this SEPTA power plant in Nicetown.

25 I would like to define the environment

1 also as the idea of jobs. The idea of
2 possibility of using this site to create a great
3 number of jobs. Because without jobs in a
4 community, the environment is very unhealthy.
5 This is a 27-acre contiguous piece of ground
6 that has three street fronts, a train stop, a
7 bus stop, a Wissahickon Avenue address and a
8 Roosevelt Boulevard on and off ramp. That's
9 27 acres of contiguous property. It could be a
10 huge opportunity to create a huge number of jobs
11 for the men and women of our community.

12 Climate is very important in our
13 community. I don't want to -- I don't want to
14 take away from the other testimony that's been
15 made. Climate is critical. But climate can
16 also include the ability for men and women to
17 have work, to be able to come home and have
18 families to bring something home to.

19 This piece of property located in
20 certain parts of the City would have had a PIDC
21 plan put together for it. And there would have
22 been number of jobs, stores, Home Depot, what
23 have you to create a number of jobs for people
24 in that community, which is what people really,
25 really need. On top of clean air, the next most

1 important thing for the men and women of our
2 community is the opportunity to have gainful
3 employment. And 27 acres of contiguous land
4 with a train stop, a bus stop, a Wissahickon
5 Avenue address, an on and off exit and entrance
6 to Roosevelt Boulevard across from \$130 million
7 health center is a place that would be
8 invaluable to a number of different commerce
9 opportunities.

10 And so, I would like to suggest a way
11 out of this mess is to say no to this way of
12 developing this 27-acre contiguous piece of
13 property to this power plant and say yes to PIDC
14 doing a plan that markets this property as a
15 property that is, I think, probably the most
16 valuable piece of property in Northwest
17 Philadelphia if not Philadelphia that's
18 contiguous, that's undeveloped, that has all of
19 the assets I have pointed out repeatedly, that
20 could create the opportunity for men and women
21 of our neighborhood to have what they need, as
22 much as they need, clean air. And that's jobs.

23 Several weeks ago we had five men in
24 Germantown shot. Now they were shot as a
25 result, in my estimation, of not having the

1 opportunity to have gainful employment. So,
2 environment is critical. When bullets start to
3 fly, we can either talk about guns, we can talk
4 about crime or we can talk about jobs. Economic
5 opportunity. This site lends itself tremendous
6 amount of economic opportunity.

7 When I was first introduced to this
8 situation at a state representative office,
9 there was a SEPTA representative there. He
10 immediately said to me the value of this site
11 is, it will create two jobs. I couldn't believe
12 it. I said, sir, this site can create many more
13 jobs than that. You know, we have to change
14 what we are talking about. Rather than talking
15 about polluting, rather than talking about
16 crime, rather than talking about getting rid of
17 guns, we need to talk about creating economic
18 prosperity for neighborhoods like Nicetown and
19 Germantown and North Philadelphia. If we don't
20 do that, the air can be as clean as it wants to
21 be. If people aren't there to breathe it, it
22 doesn't much matter.

23 I thank you again for having this
24 hearing. I hope you will vote to oppose this
25 and understand that we have a way out. We have

1 a piece of property that can create a lot of
2 jobs if we develop it in some appropriate
3 fashion. Thank you very much.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: We thank
5 you for your testimony. I will say that around
6 the Nicetown issue, you're the first one to
7 speak to how that site can be reused in a way
8 that brings economic development to that
9 community and still achieve the goals as
10 articulated. Thank you for registering that on
11 the record.

12 Please, final testimony. We are on the
13 clock.

14 MS. BENNETT: I will only take twenty or
15 thirty seconds. My name is Sylvia Bennett.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Welcome.

17 MS. BENNETT: I live in South
18 Philadelphia. I raised five children down
19 there, two almost died eight months apart with
20 cancer. My grandchildren came down with asthma.
21 I'm a community person. I've worked in that
22 community. I've been block captain for 50
23 years. I am asking City Council to help, help,
24 help. We need help.

25 My neighbors, I watch children grow up,

1 they are dying. They are dying. I watched twin
2 boys come down with cancer. Their sister came
3 down, we almost lost her. Their father died of
4 lung cancer. Somebody has to do something. If
5 you are lying in our bed and you smell odors
6 coming in through your window with the windows
7 closed, somebody has got to stop and say these
8 people need help.

9 Where are you supposed to go if the air
10 is not right? If the children playing in the
11 parks across from me picking up all types of
12 bacteria from what's coming out of the air. We
13 need help, help, help.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you
16 for your testimony.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Well, tall
19 order for members of City Council and a huge
20 elephant that we have to tackle. Know that my
21 office has -- keeping a copy of all the
22 testimony. We will be meeting with a number of
23 you in the early part of the year to develop
24 our -- to enhance our own already prescribed
25 legislative agenda. I do commit to a couple

1 letters that I am going to write to agencies and
2 individuals that I will leave nameless now.
3 Member of this testimony audience will be
4 copied. You have given us huge assignments,
5 terrific facts based on data which drives a lot
6 of policy decisions.

7 So, thank you all very, very much for
8 your personal testimony, your expert testimony
9 and just for caring about how we can indeed
10 authentically grow a greener cleaner City.

11 The City Committee on the Environment
12 Sustainability is recessed until the call of the
13 Chair. Thank you all very much.

14 (The Committee meeting adjourned at 4:17
15 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

ANGELA M. KING, RPR,
Court Reporter, Notary Public

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