



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES A BUILDING DECARBONIZATION WORKING GROUP

The Working Group will recommend equitable solutions to address the 70% of emissions that come from buildings in the city

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot announced today a Building Decarbonization Working Group that will craft recommendations to chart a course that will dramatically reduce the emissions from the built environment and further a green economic recovery in Chicago. Currently, buildings account for 70% of Chicago's greenhouse gas emissions and the City must reduce energy consumption in buildings to meet its long-term climate goals. The Working Group will recommend policies and programs for an equity-focused building emission reduction strategy that lowers economic burdens on residents and businesses, reduces energy insecurity for communities of color, and uses an equity lens to assess the cost and impact of these strategies. This effort will lead to a significant step towards the City's commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement and power 100% of buildings citywide with renewable energy by 2035.

"The City of Chicago is deeply committed to advancing a robust climate strategy that is aligned with the goals set forth by the Paris Climate Agreement. This begins with dramatically reducing emissions from the built environment," said Mayor Lightfoot. "A significant portion of our city's emissions come from buildings, which presents an important opportunity to invest in our existing and new building stock to drive equitable and green economic solutions right here at home. I look forward to receiving recommendations from the Working Group that will keep our communities healthy, lower household utility costs, provide residents with good-paying sustainable jobs, and bolster our green economic recovery at the local level."

In partnership with Elevate and NRDC, the Mayor's Office and the Department of Buildings have spent the past several months conducting best practice research on peer cities across the country that have building decarbonization programs, and has held focus groups with key local stakeholders including labor, property owners, affordable housing organizations, green jobs organizations, small businesses, manufacturing, building developers, youth and design professionals. Through the



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research and stakeholder conversations, the City identified that the technology exists today to have highly energy-efficient buildings that produce renewable energy onsite, or procure enough carbon-free energy to meet building energy consumption needs.

“The Department of Buildings is committed to working with these stakeholders to identify and implement building decarbonization strategies that will leverage existing technologies while balancing the cost of implementation with the urgency of climate change,” said Commissioner Matt Beaudet. “The framework is there - through our recent and ongoing building code modernization efforts - for us to determine expedient and equitable solutions.”

Over the course of the next several months, the Working Group will craft a series of equitable policies and programs that fall into one of four categories: innovation and building design in new construction, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and building electrification. The working group will consist of representatives from the private, public and non-profit sectors that represent the wide array of stakeholders whose collaboration will be needed to decarbonize buildings across Chicago.

"Elevate is pleased to partner with the City, NRDC and the Building Decarbonization Working Group to reduce emissions associated with energy consumption in buildings, said Anne Evens, CEO of Elevate. “We are grateful to all the Working Group members for their service. We know that climate change is real and impacts people every day whether they believe in the science or understand what decarbonization means. We also believe that the solutions to this crisis hold the key to successful businesses, healthier communities and improved quality of life. That's why we're delighted to be part of the city's solution-oriented approach. Let's get to work.”

Through the policies and programs, the Working Group recommends, the City will chart a course forward to achieve zero net carbon buildings in the city, a critical strategy to enable the City to meet its climate commitments. The City anticipates beginning to implement the recommendations from the working group this winter.

"Equity is a lens revealing ways to level our playing field. The fight for energy equity will be won at drawing tables like this one - where policy and investment give Black Chicago a rare chance onto the ground floor of emerging technology,” said Naomi Davis, Director of Blacks in Green (BIG). “These frontier times are our historic moment to do good; fuel switching has the power to transform the economic reality of black households at scale - not just with jobs but with energy ownership. Thus, we tackle the twin crises of pollution and poverty, beginning with deep engagement and research, employer-hosted education and training, and continuing with curated



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networking and financing. BIG is honored and excited beyond measure to undertake this mission with this team Mayor Lightfoot has assembled.”

The Building Decarbonization Working Group will include the following participants:

- Aaron Durnbaugh, Loyola University Chicago
- Aaron Johnson, City of Chicago
- Abe Scarr, Illinois PIRG
- Al Walker, Windsor Park Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Alicia Ponce, APMonarch
- Angela Tovar, City of Chicago
- Arathi Gowda, SOM
- Bill Abolt, AECOM
- Brad Roback, City of Chicago
- Brian Imus, Illinois Green Alliance
- Carter O'Brien, Field Museum
- Charlene Andreas, LUCHA
- Courtney Hanson, People for Community Recovery
- Daniel Robles, Illinois Environmental Council
- Doug Farr, Farr Associates
- Emily Purcell, Solomon Cordwell Buenz
- Erin Hatcher, AMLI Residential
- Farzin Parang, BOMA/Chicago
- Ferris Batie, City of Chicago
- Gabriel Dziekiewicz, HACIA
- Gary Cuneen, Seven Generations Ahead
- Ghian Foreman, Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative
- Grant Ullrich, City of Chicago
- Jay Rowell, HIRE360
- Jeannette LeZaks, Slipstream
- Jessica Beverly, Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter
- Joel Freehling, APTIM
- Jon Horek, Sargent & Lundy
- Jonathan Pereira, Plant Chicago
- Katherine Elmore, Community Investment Corporation
- Katie Kaluzny, Illinois Green Alliance
- Kyra Woods, City of Chicago
- Lesley Showers, Institute of Cultural Affairs
- Linda Sanchez, Green Chicago Real Estate
- Lois Vitt Sale, Wight & Company
- Luke Leung, SOM



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- Mathilda Taufmann, Sunrise Movement, First Ward Youth Council
- Matthew Smith, HACIA
- Michael Jacobson, Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association
- Mohammad Heidarinejad, Illinois Institute of Technology
- Naomi Davis, Blacks in Green
- Patty Lloyd, Leopardo Companies, Inc.
- Paul Colgan, Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago (HBAGC)
- Richelle Moreno , AXIOM CONTRACTORS LLC
- Rick Tonielli, ComEd
- Robert Hattier, IBEW Local 134
- Ron Tabaczynski, BOMA/Chicago
- Saagar Patel, ASHRAE- IL
- Saranya Gunasingh, Slipstream
- Scott Farbman, dbHMS
- Stacey Paradis, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
- Susan Pearson, Merritt Connect, Inc.
- Terry McGoldrick, IBEW
- Tom Benedetto, Chicagoland Apartment Association
- Victoria Young-Wilson, Naturally Urban Environmental Inc

Facilitation and technical support will be provided by the following participants:

- Anne Evens, Elevate
- Athena Gore, Elevate
- Elena Savona, Elevate
- Gustavo Sandoval, Elevate
- Hank Love, Elevate
- Julia Murphy, NRDC
- Kari Ross, NRDC
- Lindy Wordlaw, Elevate
- Mary Nicol, NRDC
- Sandra Henry, Elevate
- Stefan Shaffer, NRDC
- Quinn Bieber, Elevate

Chicago is one of 25 cities selected to participate in the Bloomberg Philanthropies American Cities Climate Challenge, an effort to resource cities to take strong action to reduce pollution that contributes to climate change and impacts public health. As part of the Challenge and in line with the City's community-wide 100% clean energy commitment, Chicago is prepared to take bold action to reduce emissions from its building and transportation sectors. The Lightfoot administration is underway with collaborative efforts to develop and enact strategies that will develop an equity-



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based climate action plan and move Chicago to reach its climate commitments over the next decade.

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