



## GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

### Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency

*Chair*  
Uwe S. Brandes

*Commissioners*  
Alan Etter  
Maureen Holman  
Anthony Kane  
Sandra Knight  
Peggy Keller  
Melissa Lavinson  
Colin McCormick  
Chelsea Mervenne  
Chester McPherson  
Vaughn Perry  
Jason Turner  
Kate Zyla  
Molly Rauch  
Stephen Moore  
Jim Dougherty

*Designated Staff Executive*  
Kate Johnson

May 12, 2021

*Via email: mcheh@dccouncil.us*

Councilmember Mary M. Cheh, Chair  
Committee on Transportation and the Environment  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Letter to Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Dear Committee Chair Cheh and Members of the Committee,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in the recent performance oversight hearing and with this letter I would like to reiterate the request I made in my testimony and that we subsequently explored in questioning.

The Commission is in immediate need of dedicated FTE staff support. While staff members at the DC-DOEE have always been supportive and collaborative to the Commission, no funds or staff have been dedicated to support our day-to-day work.

Today, our administrative, communications and research functions are being advanced exclusively through the volunteer efforts of the Commission members themselves and with minor support from unpaid student interns from Georgetown University. Even the recent creation and maintenance of our website has been stood up independently by the Commission and is maintained through volunteer efforts.

The status quo of no dedicated staff or staff support is unsustainable. We believe that Council's reasoning behind the creation of the Commission was and remains of critical importance to guiding the District's actions on climate change. Our quarterly public meetings have engaged local stakeholders and globally significant thought-leaders alike, and we have documented this on our public website: [www.dcccr.org](http://www.dcccr.org) and will incorporate our learnings in our next report. But there is so much more value and impact that we want to deliver as we strive to meet the goals of the legislation that formed us.

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We are aware of other DC Commissions who have been allocated full-time staff support and the DC Public Service Commission, with which we have a major coordination agenda, has the benefit of many dozens of full-time staff.

We are now crafting the strategy to produce our next legislatively-mandated report which will be delivered to the Mayor and the Council in the fall of 2022. In short, we are at a moment where the Commission has been brought into being, but needing to grow into the Council's legislative vision of influence and impact.

Over the longer term, D.C. Law 21-185 recognized the need (and opportunity) for diversified financial support for the Commission and established a dedicated fund to accept District appropriations, private donations or federal grants. To date, the Commission has received no funds in this dedicated vehicle from any source. Preliminary exploratory dialogue with representatives of the philanthropy community start with a simple question: "Why hasn't the District provided the basic support to stand up the administrative functions of the Commission?"

We request the following in the FY2022 budget: 1) funding for two FTE positions: Secretary and Lead Researcher, and 2) funding to establish a Commission internship program which takes advantage of the significant community of graduate students enrolled at Washington, D.C. universities.

Thank you very much for your attention and consideration. I look forward to responding to any additional questions or clarifications you might have.

Sincerely,

Uwe S. Brandes, Chair

Cc:

Chairperson Phil Mendelson  
Councilmember Charles Allen  
Councilmember Christina Henderson  
Councilmember Janeese Lewis George  
Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie  
Michael Porcello, Legislative & Committee Director  
Members of the Commission

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