

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COUNCILMEMBER JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, WARD 4
CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

Memorandum

TO: Chairman Phil Mendelson
FROM: Councilmember Janeese Lewis George 
RE: Request to Place Emergency Measures on the Agenda for the February 3, 2026 Legislative Meeting
DATE: January 29, 2026

This memorandum is to request that the following measures be placed on the agenda for the February 3, 2026 Legislative Meeting:

- **Net Zero Modification and Preservation Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2026**
- **Net Zero Modification and Preservation Emergency Amendment Act of 2026**
- **Net Zero Modification and Preservation Temporary Amendment Act of 2026**

This emergency legislation is necessary to uphold robust environmental protections by refining net zero energy requirements so they can be delivered consistently across District capital and housing projects.

In 2023, the Council enacted the Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act, requiring new or substantially improved District-owned or District-financed projects to meet net zero energy standards. In response, the Council has repeatedly been required to provide targeted budget enhancements to support individual projects in meeting these standards. Most recently, the FY26 budget included nearly \$10 million in additional funding for specific net zero projects; however, those funds have not been deployed by the Executive for their intended purposes.

At the same time, the Executive has publicly stated—and subsequently confirmed through agency actions and testimony—that certain projects will no longer be submitted to the Green Building Advisory Council for required review, despite clear statutory requirements. This departure from existing law has created uncertainty for District agencies, project teams, and Council oversight, and has undermined the predictability needed to plan and deliver capital projects.

The Council has also had to enact multiple rounds of emergency legislation to exempt District-financed affordable housing projects from net zero requirements in order to preserve housing production timelines and financing certainty. These repeated emergency fixes highlight the need for a more durable and coordinated update to the statutory framework.

In consultation with the Executive, the Council has determined that immediate legislative action is required to realign net zero requirements with available resources, clarify applicability across project types, and establish environmentally responsible but achievable standards. Without

emergency action, the Executive will be unable to budget capital projects responsibly for FY27, and affordable housing developers seeking District financing will lack sufficient time and clarity to design projects that comply with evolving requirements.

This emergency legislation provides the necessary flexibility to preserve environmental goals while restoring predictability, compliance, and fiscal responsibility in the District's capital and housing programs.

Drafts are attached pending final review from the Office of the General Counsel.

If you have questions, please reach out to Sebastian Weinmann at sweinmann@dccouncil.gov