

PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING ON

The Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency

Before the Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Councilmember Mary Cheh, Chair

February 14, 2018 11:00 AM

John A. Wilson Building

Testimony of Kevin Clinton

Chairman

Good afternoon, members of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment. My name is Kevin Clinton and I am the Chief Operating Officer of the Federal City Council, a nonprofit civic organization that works to make our city a better place. I am also the Chair of the Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency and I am here today to testify about all of the progress the Commission has made over the last year and how we are well-positioned to begin our next year.

First, I want to say how inspiring this Commission's broad mission has been for its members, including myself. The Federal City Council was an early supporter of the city's efforts to be part of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities program. A core tenant of the program is that resilience challenges need to be addressed in a dedicated manner and cannot be solved by any one agency, a single discipline or any one sector of the economy. It has been a gratifying experience to come together across disciplines and across sectors to work on such an important charge.

The Commission spent the past year on three primary activities:

1. Organizing the administrative mechanisms to function as a commission;
2. Meeting with DC agency staff to survey the extent of existing policy making, including the review of recently completed plans—Climate Ready DC (DOEE), Clean Energy DC (DOEE) and other activities associated with the SustainableDC initiative of the Department of Energy & Environment.
3. Directly supporting the outreach efforts of the Rockefeller-funded CRO in an effort to provide input into Resilient DC (OCA).

This resilience framework provides an opportunity to look—beyond any one sector—at risks associated with climate change, economic change, population growth and technological change. We believe the Commission’s mission and composition positions us well to augment DC’s nationally recognized efforts in these areas.

Accomplishments to Date

The Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency’s commissioners were fully sworn in on March 7, 2018 and held four meetings over the course of the year. At each meeting, the Department of Energy & Environment and the Chief Resilience Officer presented information to the Commission about the government’s recent and existing efforts to develop and engage the public on three plans—Clean Energy DC, Climate Ready DC and Resilient DC. The Commission provided extensive input to agency representatives in the preparation of each of these documents.

The composition of the Commission allowed us to provide input from a diverse set of perspectives. We drew from expertise residing at universities, national advocacy groups, utilities, environmental justice organizations, local experts and broad-based civic organizations.

During the summer of 2018, Commission members participated in the Resilient DC kickoff and in five discovery-area working groups that met on a biweekly basis. Members of the Commission who participated in the groups helped to conduct analysis and diagnostic work that advanced new understanding and identified new opportunities. The five groups included:

- *Integrate District Planning and Execution.* How can DC better coordinate planning efforts and link them to policies, regulations, performance management and funding decisions to ensure effective and efficient implementation of District priorities?
- *Institutionalize Climate Action.* How can DC build upon climate leadership to further incorporate consideration of climate change throughout DC?
- *Create Access to Opportunity in all Neighborhoods.* How can DC leverage population and economic growth to increase economic mobility for all residents?
- *Respond to and Leverage Technological Change.* How can DC prepare for and capitalize upon disruptions in technology to drive inclusive economic growth and ensure preparedness?
- *Honor the Anacostia River.* How can DC fully achieve the potential of the Anacostia River to generate improved health outcomes, biodiversity, economic activity, connectivity, cultural amenities and recreational opportunities for District residents?

Each of these working groups also addressed crosscutting themes. For example, they considered how the city could better leverage international and national institutions such as think tanks, universities, cultural institutions, philanthropies and non-profits. They also considered how to advance racial equity, with the goal of eliminating disparities in economic, social, health and environmental outcomes.

At the culmination of this process, the Commission participated in the Resilient DC Vision Setting Workshop, which included the Mayor's Resilience Cabinet. At the meeting, we took part in an exercise to finalize a vision and outline for DC's Resilience Strategy that included the vision, goals and objectives for the strategy. It is our understanding that this document will be produced in the coming weeks.

Additionally, the DC Council's Nicole Rentz provided a briefing to the Commission on the Clean Energy DC Omnibus Act. The Commission discussed the bill but as a matter of principle and our mission to provide long-range guidance to the District, Commissioners decided not to provide any specific comments to this Committee or to the Council.

We are proud of our work this year. However, I would like to make it clear that we did not meet our mandated goals as established by our authorizing legislation. We were to provide: 1) preliminary recommendations for mitigation of climate change impacts and vulnerabilities, and 2) preliminary recommendations to coordinate adaptation strategies across agencies and other entities. Working without any dedicated staff to administer the Commission left us with very marginalized capacity to produce these documents. Acting pragmatically, it was easiest for us to provide real-time guidance to the District's core documents. Moving forward, we will be better positioned to deliver dedicated deliverables. Our appointment is now in place and we have a better understanding of how our mandate intersects with work already being conducted by District agencies.

We are particularly grateful to the Office of the City Administrator who has identified and posted a position to support the Commission. We believe this new resource will go a long way towards addressing the Commission's constraints.

The priorities on our agenda for the year ahead consist of those stipulated in our authorizing legislation:

- A comprehensive inventory of at-risk infrastructure; provided, that the Commission may redact portions of the inventory in the interest of national security or public safety;
- A list of action items needed to reduce vulnerabilities related to climate change, including recommendations for coordination of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies to increase resilience across agencies and other entities;
- Recommendations for legislative or regulatory changes needed to implement action items; and
- Recommendations for future updates to the Resilient DC Plan, the Climate Adaptation Plan, the All Hazards Mitigation Plan and the Comprehensive Energy Plan.

To fulfill these responsibilities, the Commission has already met its first goal of the year; the Commission held a facilitated strategic planning retreat hosted by Georgetown University on January 17, 2019. The purpose the retreat was to develop

a strategic workplan and timeline for meeting the Commission's legislative requirements.

At the next Commission meeting on February 20, the Commission will establish subcommittees for executing on this workplan.

The Commission plans to complete the deliverables and publish a report on a schedule to be agreed upon by the full Commission, which I expect to be by the end of the fiscal year. The Urban & Regional Planning program at Georgetown University has designed a practicum course for a team of graduate students to support the Commission in its work.

The report will carry out a literature review and identify best practices, including those recommended by similar Commissions in Maryland, Virginia and Hawaii. It will identify baseline knowledge frameworks, associated risk assumptions, and it will explore how DC policies should relate to future climate scenarios. It will explore how governance structures relate to resilience—for example, how agencies, instrumentalities, utilities and private sector offer combined strategies to make the District more resilient. It will recommend ways for government agencies to monitor their progress in implementing DC's resilience policies. And given the changing nature of climate-related risk, we will explore alternative governance frameworks that allow the District to evolve and innovate in response to evolving risk assessments. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it will recommend ways to raise the public's awareness of climate change, climate risk and resilience with the goal

of building more support for prudent public and private actions to make our city more resilient.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.