

STATEMENT

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House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming
Field Hearing on "Big Cities, Bright Lights: Pathways to a Clean Energy Future"
in Seattle, Washington on November 2, 2007

Good afternoon, Chairman Markey, and distinguished members of the Committee. It is a pleasure to appear before you. I am Antonio Villaraigosa, Mayor of the City of Los Angeles. I want to thank the members of this committee for the opportunity to address these extremely important policy issues facing our country.

We know that global warming is a real and gathering threat to our very way of life, and a threat to the earth's ecosystem. Our collective belief is what brings us here today. We all share in the responsibility to address global climate change.

My city, the City of Los Angeles is one of the world's greatest cities, but our impact on the global environment is huge. Citywide emissions account for fifty-one-point-six million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, which is roughly equal to ten million cars on the road every year.

The world's top atmospheric scientists predict that global temperatures are likely to rise between three-point-five and thirteen degrees Fahrenheit in California alone.

And sea levels are likely to increase seven to twenty-three inches by the end of the century if we continue burning fossil fuels at the current rate.

Cities have been on the forefront of fighting global warming. Cities are the first responders, the front lines of natural catastrophe. We do not have the time or the luxury to engage in long debates about a crisis that is all too familiar in our cities.

We see the threats and impacts of climate change unfolding in front of our eyes.

For the City of Los Angeles, we see longer and hotter summers, we are experiencing a severe drought, our loss of water threatens public health and our economy, and we have seen the devastation caused by wildfire.

The wildfires were responsible for the single largest evacuation in California history. We saw more than 500,000 people evacuated in Southern California.

Winds fanned a fire that destroyed more than 2,000 homes and charred more than 690 square miles. That's one and a half times bigger than the entire city of Los Angeles.

In May 2007, I unveiled *Green LA*, the City's action plan to lead the nation in fighting global warming. *Green LA* is an action plan that builds upon the bold policies and projects already being implemented to green Los Angeles.

We will achieve a 20% renewable energy goal by 2010, and we are increasing the renewable energy sold by the Department of Water and Power – the largest municipal utility in the country -- to 35% by 2020. We adopted an aggressive Clean Air Action Plan for the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach that will reduce port air pollution by 45%. The City of Los Angeles has mandated green building standards for all new public buildings, and we have grown our alternative fuel fleet to be the largest municipal alternative fuel fleet on the West Coast.

The City of Los Angeles is leading the way in fighting global warming. Together, we can and must do more.

Our Green LA plan will reduce the City of Los Angeles' greenhouse gas emissions thirty-five percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and achieve 35% renewable energy by 2020 - one of the most ambitious goals set by a major American city.

To achieve this goal, I know we *must* be aggressive. We *have* to be bold.

We look to reduce our city-wide emissions by nearly nineteen million metric tons, which is equivalent to the annual carbon footprint of one million people or the entire carbon footprint of the Dominican Republic.

We look to reduce energy consumption, to transition to renewable power sources, and to change the ways we commute to work and school.

We are creating jobs and growing our economy by investing in green technologies.

We are redesigning our city to increase parks and open space and increasing water efficiency. We are creating incentives for investments in innovative technology, setting smart new standards for building green and land use planning, and increasing solid waste recycling.

Chairman Markey and members of the Committee...I applaud you for taking leadership on our global climate crisis.

Increasingly, we are all members of a larger global community, joined in more ways, in more places, and by more technologies than we can possibly identify or enumerate.

And more than ever, we are linked by common global environmental and economic challenges. Just as NO family would watch its house burn down without rallying the community to fight the fire, we need to sound the alarm, and face this global challenge together.

It's time for critical thinking and innovation.

We need to change the way we do business, to use the collective purchasing power and political will of cities across the US to stimulate a green economy.

We must prime our workforce and technology to grow green and lead us into a future where our way of life is not threatened by environmental disasters and harm to the public health. Representative Hilda Solis, from Los Angeles is championing the need to train a new generation of our workforce to capitalize on the growing green economy.

We must think beyond the obvious to understand the greater connections and consequences between life in cities and the havoc we wreak on our environment.

We must rethink the greatest contributors to our changing climate - electricity generation and transportation.

We need to rebuild our cities to smartly plan for transportation where the built environment and land use are linked.

It's time we take control of our economy and plan for people and healthy communities by stimulating green growth in our cities.

Transportation is the fastest growing source of carbon emissions in the country. In 2005, the transportation sector emitted 33% of all U.S. energy-related emissions. And in Los Angeles, the car-capital of the world, transportation related emissions were more than 50% of the total carbon emissions in the City.

Across the country, cities are reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and investing in hybrid technology for municipal operations. Los Angeles, for example, has the largest municipal alternative fuel fleet on the West Coast, and we are replacing nearly all of our passenger vehicles, trash collection trucks, and street sweepers with hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles – saving 10.6 million gallons of gasoline and 3.3 million gallons of diesel per year.

Members of the Committee...Cities are leading the way. The federal government must also lead.

We ask for more focus on new and **alternative engine technology**. And we must find innovative ways within our federal tax codes to provide incentives to auto manufacturers to produce alternative fuel passenger, light duty and heavy duty vehicles. And we must provide incentives for consumers – businesses or individuals – to purchase these vehicles.

Cities look to the federal government to support **green electricity generation, and capitalize on our country's renewable resource opportunities**. In Los Angeles, for

example, we have set an aggressive goal to generate 20% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2010 and 35% by 2020. Since July 2005, the city's Department of Water and Power increased nearly tripled its renewable energy portfolio. We are also pioneering a groundbreaking project to convert biomass into clean energy. The Terminal Island Renewable Energy (TIRE) Project injects biosolids into depleted oil and gas reservoirs. With naturally occurring high temperatures and pressure, the biosolids will become gas that will then be converted to electricity. The TIRE Project creates renewable energy, reduces trucking costs associated with transporting biosolids, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering biosolids underground.

And finally, our national leadership needs to recognize that it is time **change the way we build** in this country. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (US EIA), buildings are responsible for almost half, forty-eight percent of all energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions annually. 76% of all power plant-generated electricity is used just to operate buildings.

Our national policy direction should capitalize on energy efficient programs, make resources available and eliminate barriers for green building. It is not simply about telling people to install a compact florescent light bulb, it is about providing the tools and incentives necessary to build green from the ground up.

Chairman Markey and Committee members, it is not *easy* being green. But we can't be a great country and a responsible global citizen if we don't assume global environmental leadership.

We need the support of strong policies at the federal, state, and local levels. We have the unique opportunity to advance an innovative environmental agenda at the national level with the strong leadership in Congress.

We have the state of California leading the country by example in the fight against climate change. And in Los Angeles, I have a commitment to make my city the cleanest and greenest big city in the nation.

As a nation, we must lead and confront our most daunting set of challenges we face in our collective fight against global warming.

Chairman Markey and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for your commitment and leadership.