



# City of Chicago



R2023-307

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:**

2/1/2023

**Sponsor(s):**

Vasquez, Jr. (40)  
Rodriguez Sanchez (33)  
Ramirez-Rosa (35)  
Martin (47)  
Hadden (49)  
La Spata (1)

**Type:**

Resolution

**Title:**

Call for subject matter hearing(s) on health costs of negative effects posed by fossil fuel companies

**Committee(s) Assignment:**

Committee on Health and Human Relations

**A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE CITY OF CHICAGO TO EXAMINE THE HEALTH COST OF NEGATIVE EXTERNALITIES POSED BY FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Chicago and communities across the State of Illinois are already experiencing the effects of global climate disruption. Over the past 120 years, the average daily temperature in Illinois has increased by 1–2°F in most areas, mean precipitation has increased by 5–20%, and the number of 2-inch rain days has increased by 40%;<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, trends in precipitation and temperature extremes are likely to continue unless there are ambitious actions to curb greenhouse gas emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, in October 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the largest collaborative and consensus-based effort among the world's scientific community, conservatively estimated that global net greenhouse gas emissions must reach net zero no later than 2050 in order to avoid a dangerous increase in global temperatures that result in long-lasting and/or catastrophic and irreversible climate impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the IPCC warned on April 4, 2022, that "limiting warming to around 1.5°C (2.7°F) requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest, and be reduced by 43% by 2030," while methane must be reduced by a third, and that "even if we do this, it is almost inevitable that we will temporarily exceed this temperature threshold"; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Climate and Health Assessment of the U.S. Global Climate Change Research Program identified climate change as a significant threat to the health of the people of the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, changes to the climate were caused by, and continue to be exacerbated by, unabated fossil fuel use; since the 1960s, unchecked fossil fuel combustion has caused an unprecedentedly rapid rise in the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere; indeed, fossil fuel combustion accounts for nearly 80 percent of all GHG emissions between 1970 and 2010; as a result, more heat has been, is being, and will continue to be trapped by the atmosphere, triggering changes to the climate; and

**WHEREAS**, fossil fuel companies have substantially contributed to and exacerbated the impacts of human-caused climate change, thereby substantially contributing to Chicago's injuries; fossil fuel companies are responsible for billions of tons of the excess greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere; they have sold a substantial percentage of all the fossil fuels whose intended and foreseeable use – i.e., combustion – contributed to and exacerbated the impacts of climate change; moreover, long after they became aware of the

dangers of climate change, these companies chose to develop dirtier fuel sources and sell dirtier fuels that create substantially more GHGs than traditional fossil fuels when burned, notably those developed from the Canadian tar sands; and

**WHEREAS**, fossil fuel companies have known for nearly 50 years that greenhouse gas pollution from their products has a significant impact on the Earth's climate and sea levels; their awareness of the negative implications of their own behavior corresponds almost exactly with skyrocketing greenhouse gas emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, fossil fuel companies acted to prevent and forestall changes in energy use and supply, which they knew were needed, exacerbating the harms suffered by Chicago and its residents; and by hiding what they knew about, and affirmatively misrepresenting the dangers of unabated fossil fuel use, the companies protected fossil fuel demand, and obstructed the changes needed to prevent or at least minimize the impacts of climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the 2021 Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change in Illinois,<sup>2</sup> the state will experience warming of 4–9°F, with large increases in extreme high temperatures, increasingly severe summer droughts, and overall increases in precipitation, with increases in both heavy rains and the length of dry spells; and

**WHEREAS**, temperature rise will increase the risk of severe heat-related illnesses, such as heat stroke; and

**WHEREAS**, increased intensities of rainfall events will exacerbate stresses on aging urban drainage systems and increase the incidence of combined sewer outflows (CSOs), which affect water quality of streams, rivers, and Lake Michigan in the Chicago region; and

**WHEREAS**, cities in the upper Mississippi River system and in the western Great Lakes region, including those in the Chicago region, are being increasingly impacted by flooding, which can lead to increased risk of waterborne infectious diseases, mold exposure, injuries, and emotional distress; and

**WHEREAS**, rising temperatures and increased precipitation have already created conditions that permit mosquitoes and ticks to survive in previously unsuitable locations; the biting season will become longer, and the risk of vector-borne diseases will increase; and

**WHEREAS**, lakefront erosion and residential and commercial flooding in Chicago are being accelerated by a combination of warming temperatures, increased precipitation, and extreme storms; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change has significant impacts on all community members, but disproportionately impacts those who are most vulnerable, in particular those who are currently living in poverty with high rates of chronic disease, poor housing, barriers to healthcare access, unhealthy community design, and polluted air, the young, and the elderly; and

## Committee on Health and Human Relations

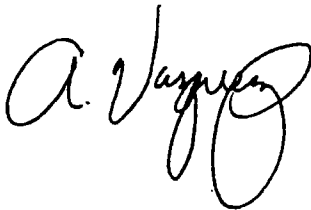
**WHEREAS**, the cost of climate change is increasing dramatically, with weather/climate disaster events in the United States in 2022 resulting in losses exceeding \$160 billion; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago taxpayers cannot pay the full costs of the remediation that is needed, nor should they; the costs should be shared by the fossil fuel companies because they knowingly and substantially contributed to the climate crisis by producing, promoting and selling a substantial portion of the fossil fuels that are causing and exacerbating climate change, while concealing and misrepresenting the dangers associated with their intended use; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Chicago recognizes and acknowledges that the impacts of climate change pose a life-altering threat to our city and the region, now and increasingly in the future, as well as the state, our nation, and all life on the planet,

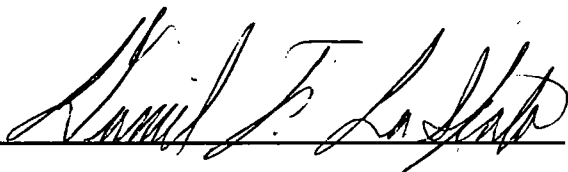
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, The City of Chicago file a complaint against fossil fuel companies to ensure that the parties who have profited from externalizing the consequences and costs of dealing with global warming bear the costs of those impacts, rather than the City, taxpayers, residents, or broader segments of the public.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Committee on Health and Human Relations hold a subject matter hearing on the physical, environmental, social and economic layers of burden experienced by the City's residents through the lens of health effects from these fossil fuel externalities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Vasquez, Jr.", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Andre Vasquez, Jr.  
Alderman, 40th Ward

Committee on Health and Human Relations

1. 

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_\_

Committee on Health and Human Relations

22. \_\_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_\_

24. \_\_\_\_\_

25. \_\_\_\_\_

26. \_\_\_\_\_

27. \_\_\_\_\_

28. \_\_\_\_\_

29. \_\_\_\_\_

30. \_\_\_\_\_

31. \_\_\_\_\_

32. \_\_\_\_\_

33. 

34. \_\_\_\_\_

35. 

36. \_\_\_\_\_

37. \_\_\_\_\_

38. \_\_\_\_\_

39. \_\_\_\_\_

40. \_\_\_\_\_

41. \_\_\_\_\_

42. \_\_\_\_\_


43. \_\_\_\_\_

Committee on Health and Human Relations


44. \_\_\_\_\_

45. \_\_\_\_\_

46. \_\_\_\_\_

47.  \_\_\_\_\_

48. \_\_\_\_\_

49.  \_\_\_\_\_

50. \_\_\_\_\_