



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CHARLES ALLEN, COUNCILMEMBER – WARD 6**

Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency Act of 2015

Climate change is no longer a future event. Global warming is real and it is happening now – the situation is so serious that Pope Francis has published a blistering encyclical and call to action. The District’s climate is changing and impacting our natural resources, our built environment, our public health system and more.

For example, average temperatures are already increasing, along with the frequency of extreme heat, storms, dry summers and unhealthy air days. Air quality severely impacts those with asthma – which, in DC, includes more than 10,000 children and 45,000 adults. Extreme heat puts our seniors and children at risk. The health impacts of climate change is just one area in need of assessment, mitigation, and adaptation. Similar concerns exist for flooding and the rising sea level, the warping of asphalt and rail tracks, and the natural environment.

The purpose of the Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency Act of 2015 is to make an intentional effort to assess the impacts of the changing climate and the District’s ability to mitigate those impacts and adapt accordingly. The bill also requires similar assessments for the District’s resiliency as it relates to adverse events, such as damaging tropical storms or man-made disastrous events, including a frank look at the District’s ability to plan for, absorb, and recover from such events. Finally, the bill requires the Commission to prepare comprehensive recommendations to the Council and the Mayor to address identified vulnerabilities. In order for the District to be successful addressing these issues, this two-prong approach – (1) mitigation and adaptation to the changing climate and (2) resiliency to adverse events – is essential.

Because climate change cannot successfully be addressed piecemeal, the bill requires participation from several District agencies, including: DDOE, DDOT, OP, DOH, DMPED, DGS, HSEMA, and DC Water. The Commission would also have 16 public members – half appointed by the Mayor, the other half by the Council – with expertise in critical topics, including environmental science, environmental justice, public health, economic development, energy, and insurance.

The Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency Act of 2015 will ensure that the District is identifying the steps that must be taken now to mitigate the current and coming climate change impacts. Bringing all the related agencies and industries together ensures mitigation and adaptation are priorities as the District moves forward when planning and designing policies, programs, and projects.