



CECAP Testimony Resource Guide

Developed by Dallas People's Climate Action Plan
Dallas City Council Meeting on Wednesday, May 27th, 2020 @ 9am

Instructions for Testimony

You must be a Dallas resident to speak.

Sign up to testify during the meeting no later than 5pm on Tuesday, May 26th: [click here](#).

Remember to state your name & address at the beginning.

Tips on how to make an effective testimony:

- Personal stories are the most persuasive — draw on experiences and struggles
- Cite statistics and studies, but not too many
- State your takeaway (your “point”) clearly

Rehearse your testimony & time it!

- Typical allotted time is 3 minutes, but if many people are signed up to speak, you may be limited to 1 minute
- Plan for both 1 minute and 3 minute scenarios

The Key Takeaway

When we are done testifying, we want members of the City Council to understand: “Even if we implement CECAP perfectly, we will fall short of the goal we set when we began the CECAP process. To succeed, we will need bolder initiatives like those outlined in the Dallas People’s Climate Action Plan”

Prompts to Inspire Your Testimony

Prompt 1: Why is climate change an emergency and why do we need to take bold action now?

Prompt 2: Why is public investment in renewable energy the best way to get to net zero emissions?

Prompt 3: Why do we need to move away from a fossil fuel based natural gas system and switch to all-electric buildings?

Prompt 4: What are the benefits to people, air pollution, etc. of free and electric public transportation?



References/Talking Points

The Dallas People's Climate Plan has 74 unique climate actions that would strengthen the CECAP: read the plan [here](#). Each of the 74 actions has an action template that details the reasons and supporting statistics that lead to its inclusion in the plan.

Reference 1: The CECAP is not enough.

- The CECAP emission reductions fails to satisfy the reductions needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degC, which climate scientists stress is the maximum warming allowed in order to avoid catastrophic effects
 - Global warming with “business as usual” is projected to be 3-5 degC
 - Even differences in global impacts between 1.5 vs. 2 degrees of warming (per IPCC) is devastating:
 - 1.7 billion more people experience severe heat waves at least once every five years.
 - Seas rise – on average – another 10 centimeters (almost 4 inches),.
 - Up to several hundred million more people become exposed to climate-related risks and poverty.
 - The coral reefs that support marine environments around the world could decline as much as 99 percent.
 - Global fishery catches could decline by another 1.5 million tonnes.
- We only have 10 years (2030) left to have finished making big changes.
 - [The CECAP does not contain any enforcement on actions until 2030.](#)
 - Climate scientists are saying that the [Paris Climate Agreement is no longer enough](#), we have to do more
 - It's important that we take the big actions first, not last, because we do not have time to solve problems in implementation after 2030.
 - Susan Alvarez, director of the Dallas climate plan development, was recently quoted “Influence, education and incentives are CECAPS' initial tools to get action. Enforcement is not planned until 2030.” This won't do!
- 6 or more years of education and incentives are ineffective and inequitable.
 - Compare this with pandemic response: which is more effective? Promoting educational videos on hand washing or issuing shelter-in-place and social distancing orders?
 - Incentives shift the responsibility of climate change to the people who has the least control over it and are the most vulnerable
 - Incentives ultimately rely on the good-will of profit-seeking private interests for implementation.
 - Putting a stop to environmentally harmful practices is “out of the City's hands”, because it's up to people to make the right, “green” choice.



- The City has the power to ease or solve the current effects of environmental hardships like updating zoning practices that put polluting facilities near poor residential communities
- Incentives do not guarantee ANY change or progress
- Financial impacts of weak climate actions are WORSE than financial impacts of bold City policies & mandates
 - How much money can businesses make when:
 - We have extended droughts and limited water?
 - Food distribution is disrupted because crops are yielding less and animals are dying out?
 - Our infrastructure is destroyed and roadways are unusable from countless flooding events and tornados?
 - People can't go outside for weeks at a time because of constant heat waves?
 - The financial health of businesses relies on the physical health of its consumers
 - We saw this with the pandemic → when we got our stimulus checks, people did not spend it on consumer goods, they spent it on food, shelter, and paying down old debt.

Reference 2: Public Power

- [What is public power?](#) (and other facts about public power in the US)
- Cities with public-control of their power have the highest investment and use of green energy, are safer, cheaper, and more reliable. We are open to other approaches, but this seems to be the only solution to meet the scale of the issue in a timely fashion.
- The revenue from a public utility funnels back into city budget, not shareholder dividends.
- The easiest way for the city to do this is to create a Retail Electric Provider, sell Renewable Energy Credits immediately, get incoming revenue, and then enter PPA.
- Some of the same reasons we see that public power is important are the same reasons we think Dallas should eventually end its contract with Atmos Energy.
 - In times of crisis like this one, private companies are putting their investors before residents. Atmos is pursuing a 9.4% rate hike on Dallas residents, the monopoly gas company in Austin is pursuing a 23% rate hike on Austin residents.
 - In neither of these cases, it's not about the price of the produce, it's about making up for lost revenue and being able to pay dividends to shareholders. This is not in the interest of the public.

Reference 3: Building Electrification

- In homes: natural gas stoves put us at higher risk of asthma and lung disease because they often lead to indoor air pollution [worse than what is acceptable by outdoor standards.](#)



- In addition to every day exposure to harmful indoor air emissions, Atmos Energy infrastructure has subjected Dallas residents to harmful and dangerous pipelines that are prone to leaks and explosions.
- From wellhead to distribution: Natural gas is responsible for enormous emissions of methane, other harmful greenhouse gases, and toxins.
 - In 2019, oilfield operators were flaring and venting more natural gas than is used by some countries (including Israel)!
 - Leaks in pipeline infrastructure account for almost 3% of community-wide emissions in the city of Dallas. That's just leaks alone.
 - [A 2020 study](#) found that West Texas gas is actually a dirtier fossil fuel than coal -- which was previously thought to be the worst polluter.
- Home explosions occurred in Dallas because of old natural gas infrastructure in 2018
- This study from Rocky Mountain Institute shows that [electric appliances are cheaper in new construction than gas appliances](#).
- This article discusses the [better economics of making new buildings all electric](#) and outlines a few different policy approaches for getting there. 'It's now less expensive and more convenient to do without it. "All of the all-electric buildings I've done have been at cost or lower [than those with gas] because you're not paying for gas lines to be connected and run all through the building," he said.'

Reference 4: Free & Electric Public Transit

- Mass transit is the most sustainable approach to transportation
 - Space is a shared and scarce resource → transit vehicles can transport exponentially more people than private vehicles
 - National Association of City Transportation Officials found that dedicated transit lanes can move 4,000-8,000 people per hour vs. 600-1,600 people per hour for private car lanes.
- Partnering with rideshares is NOT a solution to public transportation problems
 - Due to deadheading, the distance traveled by rideshare drivers between trips, taking a rideshare is less sustainable than driving your car
 - Studies have found (and internal studies at Uber and Lyft have confirmed) that rideshare worsens traffic congestion
 - Private companies are not democratically accountable to the people they're servicing, unlike DART.
 - These private companies have terrible records on working safety and treatment, and their business models rely on union-busting and wage theft.
- Our most vulnerable communities rely on public transportation to get to jobs and their essentials. Without guaranteed access, they do not share the same freedoms as those with reliable transportation or those with greater financial capacities.
 - Affordable/free public transportation eases the burden of purchasing/leasing and maintaining a private vehicle
 - A study by UT Arlington on transportation equity found that Dallas residents paid more than the national average in transportation costs



- Elimination of fares reduces the risk of disease transmission as there is less need for passenger/driver interaction, and less clustering of passengers while onboarding. ([Buses in Ohio and elsewhere are doing this in response to COVID-19 pandemic](#))

Other References/Studies/Talking Points

- This plan falls short of its own goal of reducing emissions by 43% by 2030 and 100% by 2050.
- The Fourth National Climate Assessment is a federal scientific report that provides a comprehensive assessment of economic and other impacts that could potentially be avoided or mitigated with implementation of environmental and climate plans. In particular, the assessment notes that “the continued warming that is projected to occur without substantial and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions is expected to cause substantial net damage to the U.S. economy throughout this century, especially in the absence of increased adaptation efforts.”
- Moody’s Investor Service, a bond rating agency, has stated that “[c]ities’ increasing focus on climate risks is a credit positive, particularly as climate change is forecast to increase the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.” KBRA, another bond rating agency, also considers “proactive efforts by states and localities as a credit positive . . . that enhance their long-term economic health.” S&P and Fitch have similarly indicated that a city’s failure to address climate vulnerabilities could imperil credit ratings.
- The National Institute for Building Sciences’ (NIBS) report on the value of disaster mitigation highlights the significant savings that result from implementing mitigation strategies in terms of safety, and the prevention of property loss, and disruption of day-to-day life. The project team looked at the results of 23 years of federally funded mitigation grants provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and found mitigation funding can save \$6 in future disaster costs for every \$1 spent on mitigation. NIBS also found significant mitigation benefits associated with adoption of 2018 building codes developed by the International Code Council (ICC).