



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004**

Charles Allen
Councilmember, Ward 6
Chairperson
Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Committee Member
Business and Economic Development
Health
The Judiciary & Public Safety

November 21, 2024

Nyasha Smith
Secretary to the Council
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Smith:

Today, I am introducing the ***“Youth Advisory Council on Climate Change and Environmental Conservation Establishment Act of 2024”***. Please find enclosed a signed copy of the legislation.

Young people are some of the most passionate and informed advocates for climate action. Across the globe, we have seen youth-led movements—like the Fridays for Future campaign started by Greta Thunberg—transform public discourse and push for urgent policy changes to combat climate change. However, despite these significant contributions, youth voices remain underrepresented in formal decision-making spaces, including here in the District. Establishing a Youth Advisory Council dedicated to climate change and environmental conservation is a simple step to empower those most acutely impacted by the long-term effects of climate change. This bill recognizes the value of intergenerational collaboration and ensures that the perspectives of those most invested in the future are not only heard, but actively integrated into our climate strategies.

At a time when the impacts of climate change are being felt with increasing intensity, it is critical that we engage those who will inherit the planet and bear the long-term consequences of today’s decisions in the policymaking process. Youth voices have taken center stage in recent years, mostly notably internationally, in forums like the United Nations’s Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP). Youth-led climate movements and action campaigns have been steadily growing over the last decade, bringing much-needed attention to attention to the urgency of the climate crisis.

During the Committee on Transportation and the Environment’s performance oversight hearings in early 2024, youth advocates made clear that they want to be empowered to participate in climate change governance here in the District and engage more meaningful with the Council, the Executive, and other stakeholders to ensure that climate action policies are inclusive and reflect the needs of

marginalized communities. This legislation will achieve that goal, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass it so that young environmental activists have a seat at the table and know that their voices are heard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Allen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Chairperson, Committee on Transportation & the Environment

1 Janeese Lewis George
2 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George

Charles Allen
Councilmember Charles Allen

4 AKM
5 Councilmember Anita Bonds

Brianne K. Nadeau
Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau

8 BE RP
9 Councilmember Brooke Pinto

13 A BILL

16 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

21 To establish the Youth Advisory Council on Climate Change and Environmental Conservation to
22 provide an organized youth perspective on various issues, including the impacts of the
23 changing climate, adverse weather events, and ways the District can mitigate, prepare, and
24 adapt to climate change and create and sustain environmental educational opportunities for
25 youth.

27 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
28 act may be cited as the “Youth Advisory Council on Climate Change and Environmental
29 Conservation Establishment Act of 2024”.

30 Sec. 2. Youth Advisory Council on Climate Change and Environmental Conservation.

31 (a) There is established the Youth Advisory Council on Climate Change and
32 Environmental Conservation (“Youth Climate Council”), whose mission is to:

- 33 (1) Consult with and advise the Mayor, the Council of the District of Columbia,
34 including the committees with jurisdiction over the environment, natural resources, and energy,
35 the Department of Energy and Environment, the Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency,
36 and other relevant District agencies;

37 (2) Comment on legislation, laws, policies, and practices that impact youth and the
38 environment;

39 (3) Identify climate issues that disproportionately affect youth and provide
40 recommendations on how to mitigate and adapt to these issues and present methods to combat
41 climate change;

42 (4) Monitor climate programs and policies that affect youth and ensure they are
43 achieving the intended outcomes, including making recommendations on environmental education
44 and outdoor recreation programs in schools and those directed at youth and their families; and

45 (5) Collaborate with other youth organizations and entities in the District, including
46 the Youth Advisory Council (D.C. Official Code § 2–1562).

47 (b) The Youth Climate Council shall have 17 voting members, who shall be appointed as
48 follows:

49 (1) Nine members appointed by the Mayor for a term of 3 years, with initial
50 staggered appointments of 5 voting members appointed for 2 years and 4 voting members
51 appointed for 1 year, and shall be:

52 (A) Three middle school students;

53 (B) Three high school students; and

54 (C) Three college or university students from District-area colleges and
55 universities.

56 (2)(A) Eight voting members appointed by the Chairman of the Council, which
57 shall reflect each of the District’s 8 wards in consultation with each Ward Councilmember who
58 shall make recommendations from among the applicants to represent his or her respective ward;

59 (B) The voting members appointed by the Chairman of the Council shall
60 be appointed for a term of 2 years, with initial staggered appointments of 4 voting members
61 appointed for 2 years and 4 voting members appointed for 1 year.

62 (C) A member shall serve for a term of 2 years. A member may be
63 reappointed, but may not serve more than two full terms.

64 (c)(1) A member of the Youth Climate Council shall have been a District resident for at
65 least two years, not including time residing in a college dormitory, prior to their application to
66 serve on the Youth Climate Council.

67 (2) College students shall be eligible to participate in the Youth Climate Council if
68 they have been a District resident living outside a college dormitory for at least two years prior to
69 their application to serve on the Youth Climate Council.

70 (d) Youth applying to serve on the Youth Climate Council shall have:

71 (1) An interest in and motivation for climate change and resiliency;

72 (2) A background in climate-based initiatives;

73 (3) A general knowledge of how the District is affected by climate change;

74 (4) An ability to bring creative perspectives to the issue of climate change and how
75 to engage youth in mitigating and adapting to climate change risks;

76 (5) The ability to collaborate and work both patiently and constructively in a group
77 setting;

78 (6) The ability to responsibly fulfill commitments; and

79 (7) An interest in the development of leadership skills.

80 (e) Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment to the position
81 that became vacant. Voting members appointed to fill vacancies before the expiration of a voting
82 member's full term shall serve only the unexpired portion of the voting member's term.

83 (f) All initial appointments to the Youth Climate Council shall be made within 180 days
84 after the effective date of this act.

85 Sec. 3. Functions and procedures of the Youth Climate Council.

86 (a)(1) The Youth Climate Council shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary
87 for a term of one year.

88 (2) These officers may be re-elected but shall serve no more than two (2) terms in
89 any combination of offices.

90 (3) The Youth Climate Council may vote to create other leadership positions from
91 within its membership.

92 (b) The Youth Climate Council shall meet at least once per quarter.

93 (c) The chairperson of the Commission, or vice-chairperson in their absence, shall convene
94 all Youth Climate Council meetings.

95 (d)(1) The first Youth Climate Council shall create bylaws and rules to which all future
96 Youth Climate Councils shall adhere.

97 (2) Where not otherwise provided in this act or the bylaws and rules, the procedures of
98 the Youth Climate Council shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

99 (d) A majority of the voting members appointed to the Youth Climate Council at any given
100 time shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of official business.

101 (e) All actions of the Youth Climate Council shall be considered advisory and shall be
102 taken by majority vote of the voting members present and voting at a meeting.

103 (f) The Youth Climate Council may form committees or working groups from its
104 membership to consider specific subtopics and invite participation from outside individuals and
105 entities, including the public and subject-matter experts.

106 (g) The Department of Energy and Environment shall provide principal staff and
107 equipment support for the activities of the Youth Climate Council and assist with the development,
108 publication, and submission of all reports to the Council and Mayor.

109 (h) The Council may provide staff assistance to the Youth Climate Council for the purposes
110 of assistance with comments on all proposed legislation pending before the Council.

111 (i) The chairpersons of the committees with jurisdiction over the environment, natural
112 resources, and energy at the Council shall provide an opportunity for the Youth Climate Council
113 to report in person on its findings and recommendations at least once each year.

114 (j) The Commission may use space and supplies owned or rented by the District
115 government for purposes consistent with this chapter.

116 Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

117 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact
118 statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved
119 October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

120 Sec. 6. Effective date.

121 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
122 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
123 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24,
124 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)).