

Executive Order 2016-3  
April 22, 2016

## Commitment to Eliminating City-Wide Carbon Emissions and Preparing for the Long-Term Impacts of Climate Change

WHEREAS, as a coastal, urban community, Providence is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, local sea levels have risen roughly 10 inches since 1930; average annual temperatures are increasing at a rate of 1 degree Fahrenheit every 33 years; and average annual precipitation is increasing at a rate of more than 1 inch every 10 years; and these trends are projected to accelerate by the end of the century; and

WHEREAS, these climate changes have cascading effects on the city's economy, infrastructure, public health and safety, and other critical systems; and

WHEREAS, recent local and state studies including *Building Resilience to the Public Health Impacts of Climate Change* report and the Resilient PVD Lab, have reiterated the need to better understand and address climate vulnerabilities and impacts; and

WHEREAS, On July 28, 2015, Providence committed to the Compact of Mayors, the world's largest coalition of city leaders addressing climate change by pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, track progress, and prepare for the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Resilient Rhode Island Act of 2014, the State has set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 85% by 2050 and prepare for the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, as the major population and economic center of Rhode Island, Providence must lead by example and be ahead of the State's goals if Rhode Island is to meet those goals; and

WHEREAS, the most recent science indicates that achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 is necessary to avoid potentially catastrophic climate change; and


WHEREAS, Providence would be joining a growing coalition of cities around the world who are committed to carbon neutrality by or before 2050 including Boston, New York, Boulder, Portland (OR), Seattle, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Washington, DC; and

WHEREAS, the City of Providence's Environmental Sustainability Task Force has been consulted on the creation of Providence's new climate goals; and

NOW THEREFORE, do I, Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor of the City of Providence, order the following, effective immediately:

1. The following overarching goals shall be adopted citywide and added to the Sustainable Providence Plan:
  - (a) Achieve citywide carbon neutrality by 2050; and
  - (b) Assess and prepare for the impacts of climate change.
2. To achieve these new goals, the City shall adopt the following strategies:
  - (a) Regularly measure and report greenhouse gas emissions at an interval deemed appropriate by the Office of Sustainability and the Environmental Sustainability Task Force, and as resources allow; and
  - (b) Assess the social, infrastructure, and economic impacts of climate change; and
  - (c) Consider climate impacts and greenhouse gas emissions in all planning and decision making processes, including capital planning, neighborhood and comprehensive planning, and city boards and commissions; and

- (d) Address underlying community stresses including housing access, food security, environmental justice, and economic stability to increase climate resilience; and
  - (e) Partner with surrounding municipalities and the State to achieve broader regional impact.
3. As immediate next steps, the City shall implement the following priority actions within the next year:
- (a) Conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory that meets the requirements of the Compact of Mayors in order to establish a community-wide greenhouse gas emissions baseline; and
  - (b) Lead by example by tracking and disclosing municipal greenhouse gas emissions; and
  - (c) Set interim greenhouse gas reduction targets; and
  - (d) Include climate change in the update of neighborhood plans; and
  - (e) Assess the vulnerability of coastal industrial areas, including the cascading impacts on surrounding neighborhoods; and
  - (f) Engage large, long-term property owners to meet climate mitigation and resilience goals.
4. This Executive Order shall remain in full force and effect until it is repealed.



Jorge O. Elorza  
*Mayor*

Dated: April 22, 2016