

All cities, large and small, are built from the ground up; with homes and businesses as the essential building blocks. These create neighborhoods, which grow into communities, and then into towns and cities. Even a city as populous and vast as Los Angeles is still a collection of homes and businesses – in other words, neighborhoods.

All cities face challenges. Here in Los Angeles, one of our greatest concerns is our environment. We've made great strides in improving air quality, despite a population that continues to grow, bringing with it more traffic and demand for services. But I believe that the single most important environmental challenge facing us is global warming. Failure to take action right now to slow its progress could render our accomplishments moot, and make it difficult – if not impossible – to continue to improve air quality and protect public health.

Government is here to help *us* fight global warming, and is ready to offer assistance – from laws and policies to funding. As Speaker of the California State Assembly in 2002, I presided over the passage of a landmark global warming legislation that required reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles in California. The Legislature later followed that up with the passage of the California's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 which required greenhouse gas emission reductions for non-motor vehicles. We are doing our part at the local level, as well. Mayor Villaraigosa's Green LA Plan outlines steps that will slash city government and community greenhouse gas emissions even more, to 35% below 1990 levels by 2030. We already have policies that require new city buildings to be built according to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. The City Council also approved my motion to require upgrades and remodeling of existing city buildings to also meet LEED standards. As a city, we'll accomplish this by using more clean, renewable energy to generate electricity, conserving electricity ourselves, and using hybrid vehicles that use much less fuel.

Government action can help jump-start efforts and provide education about how everyone contributes to global warming through the use of fossil fuels. Education of this nature is an essential public service. But government can't do it alone. We need to get every home and business involved in order to make a real and lasting difference and guarantee a livable future for our children and grandchildren. One of the laudable local efforts to address global warming is the Wilshire Center Business Improvement District's Cool District program. This Program is a promise: that Wilshire Center businesses and residents will reduce their total greenhouse gas emissions by 2% a year for the next forty years in order to slow global warming and protect our environment. Achieving these reductions won't be easy, but our most worthwhile and important endeavors seldom are.

I salute the commitment, leadership and optimism that the Cool District Program represents, and I am appreciative that it will help advance the city's own goals. That is why my colleagues on the Los Angeles City Council voted in support of my Wilshire Center Earth Day/Car Free Day motion last month. I look forward to continuing to support the Wilshire Center and Cool District Program, and to charting its progress over the next months and years.

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