Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	21-027 **Version:** 1	**Name:**	
Type:	Information/Discussion Item	**Status:**	Agenda Ready
File created:	12/21/2020	**In control:**	City Council
On agenda:	1/12/2021	**Final action:**	
Title:	Presentation on supporting climate action items at state and federal level.		
Sponsors:			
Indexes:			
Code sections:			
Attachments:	1. 1 - MN Local Government IRP Engagement Coalition summary_121620, 2. 2 - MN Local Govermnet Coalition_IRP Letter_Final Draft, 3. 3 - BetterBuildings_2-Pager_100820, 4. 4 - Joint Letter to the legislature_Jan 2021_DRAFT, 5. 5 - Resolution Federal Carbon Legislation_EQC adopted 102120 FINAL, 6. 6 - Presentation for State climate items_011221		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result

City Council Meeting Date: January 12, 2021

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Beth Kallestad, Program Coordinator

Presentation on supporting climate action items at state and federal level.

Action Requested:
The Northfield City Council is provided with a presentation highlighting three opportunities for the City of Northfield to support climate related actions at the state and federal level.

Summary Report:
The City of Northfield's Climate Action Plan includes action item

PP 7.4 - Engage decision-makers, including local members of boards and commissions, county officials, as well as state and national representatives, around elements of the climate action plan.

As such, the following are items the City Council will be asked to consider supporting through motions and resolutions at upcoming Council Meetings.

State Level

1. **Comment Letter on Xcel Energy Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)**
   A coalition of Minnesota Cities and clean energy advocacy organizations have drafted a comment letter they are asking Northfield and other cities to support with regard to Xcel Energy's 2020-2034 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). The plan outlines the utility's resource needs over that 15 year period, and charts a

path for achieving its carbon goals of 80% reduction by 2030 and 100% carbon-free by 2050 with proposed plan retirements and new resource additions. A coalition summary document is provided with this packet for more information. The comment letter is also attached for review.

The Northfield EQC received a presentation on this IRP plan and request for comment at its December meeting. They will be asked to recommend a motion of support that Council sign on this letter at their meeting on January 20, 2021.

2. **Support for upcoming state legislative action on Building Code**

Building energy uses, especially commercial buildings, is a major contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in Northfield and other cities in Minnesota. In Minnesota, Cities are not allowed to pass ordinances regulating buildings that are more restrictive than the state building energy code.

On February 4, 2020, the Northfield City Council adopted a resolution supporting state legislative action which would allow municipalities to enact more restrictive codes if they so choose. This legislation was not adopted by the 2020 legislature.
In December 2020, the Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Commerce released a report titled Improving building energy efficiency in commercial and multi-family construction <http://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/BuildingsEnergyEfficiency2020.pdf>. With input from experts and stakeholders, the report recommends instituting a framework for the statewide commercial building energy code that ensures that all new commercial and large multifamily construction is net-zero by 2036**.**
As the 2021 legislative session gets underway, cities are being asked to support this soon-to-be drafted legislation by signing on to a letter of support. A draft letter and a fact sheet explaining more about the benefits are attached.

This item will be presented to the EQC at its January 20, 2021 meeting.

Federal Level

3. **Support for federal level adoption of carbon pricing**

At the January 19, 2021 City Council meeting the Council will be asked to consider adopting a resolution (see attached) that is being recommended by the Environmental Quality Commission.

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FEDERAL LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING A FEDERAL, REVENUE-NEUTRAL, MARKET-BASED FEE ON CARBON IN FOSSIL FUELS

The City of Northfield has acknowledged the importance of taking action on climate change, as shown by its continuing participation in Minnesota's Green Step Cities program, through implementation of the city Climate Action Plan (CAP), and through other measures. One of the elements of the CAP is to "plan for the elimination of fossil fuels in the community."

This resolution asks the federal government to put a fee on fossil fuels at the source (at the mine, well, or port of entry). This will drive down carbon pollution because energy companies, leading industries, and American consumers will move toward cleaner, cheaper options.

Many countries around the world put a price on carbon pollution. In our country, there is strong and growing support for a bipartisan approach to addressing climate change. A number of carbon pricing bills have been introduced in Congress by members of both parties. A majority of Americans think that fossil fuel companies should be required to pay a carbon tax.

Economists agree that putting a price on carbon is essential. The Economists Statement on Carbon Dividends is the largest public statement of economists in history. It states that a gradually rising carbon tax is the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions; that, because it is the most efficient way to reduce emissions, it will promote economic growth; and that the revenue raised by the tax should be returned to the people as carbon dividends. These "carbon dividends" will maintain the fairness and viability of the carbon fee. Most Americans will receive more in carbon dividends than they pay in increased energy costs. The poorest families will benefit the most.

The resolution that is being considered is consistent with the recommendations of the Economists Statement on Carbon Dividends. These principles are also supported by many businesses and faith groups. Many municipalities have passed resolutions that call for a federal carbon free and dividend.

This resolution includes action that will send a copy of the resolution to the delegations representing Northfield in both houses of the United States Congress, to the State Legislators representing Northfield, and to the Minnesota Governor. The resolution will convey to our members of Congress the knowledge that we in Northfield are working to reduce harm from climate change in our city; and that we want them to put in place a carbon fee and dividend at the national level.

Other Minnesota cities have adopted similar resolutions such as Red Wing and St. Paul.

Alternative Options:
No action at this time.

Financial Impacts:
NA

Tentative Timelines:
Items 1 & 2 - February 2, 2021 Council meeting
Item 3 - January 19, 2021 Council meeting