



**Council of the District of Columbia, Committee on Government Operations, Public Hearing on  
B23-0130 - District of Columbia Office of Resilience Establishment Act of 2019**

**October 15, 2019, 10:00 AM  
John A Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 412**

**Testimony of Chris Weiss, Executive Director, DC Environmental Network (DCEN),**

Good morning Chairperson Todd and other Councilmembers and staff.

I am Chris Weiss and I am the Executive Director of the District of Columbia Environmental Network (DCEN), and Director of the Washington DC Office for Global Green.

I am here today to testify in support of “B23-0130 - District of Columbia Office of Resilience Establishment Act of 2019.”

**We also want to urge stakeholders to work together to make sure a plan is developed that outlines what the Office of Resilience should look like in terms of staffing and associated budgetary needs. We need to make sure this office has the necessary resources to hit the ground running and start supporting climate crisis adaptation and mitigation strategies.**

The stated purpose of the act is to establish an Office of Resilience within the City Administrator's Office for the purpose of developing, coordinating, and reporting on the implementation of policies, programs, and actions with respect to Urban Resilience.

We support these broad goals.

In 2014 the DC Environmental Network, and fellow advocates, supported Councilmember Cheh’s bill, that among a number of goals, created a new Office of Waste Diversion within the DC Department of Public Works. Creation of this new office was necessary in order to create more focused efforts to update our zero-waste, recycling programs, which up until that time

were ineffective and had left the District as a last-place recycling performer in the Washington Metro Region. Since the creation of the Office of Waste Diversion the District has started to see improvement in zero-waste, recycling, waste diversion efforts and is starting to grow and evolve programs that could result in the District becoming a recycling leader. I am not sure DC would have made much progress were it not for the existence of the Office of Waste Diversion.

For almost three years the District has been working hard to develop a resilience strategy for the District. Urban resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

On April 29<sup>th</sup> of this year, Mayor Muriel Bowser, City Administrator Rashad Young, and Chief Resilience Officer Kevin Bush joined 100 Resilient Cities to release the District's first resilience strategy, [Resilient DC: A Strategy to Thrive in the Face of Change](#). The inaugural strategy provides a roadmap for preparing the city for new challenges and promoting actions related to inclusive growth, climate, smart cities, health, and equity.



The DC Environmental Network particularly supports the plan's **Goal 2, Climate Action**, that envisions a DC that is prepared for the impacts of the climate crisis and where residents and businesses take bold action to combat its causes. This section outlines initiatives that will uphold the commitments of the Paris climate agreement and lead the country in the response to climate change.

This overarching resiliency plan integrates the goals of a number District environmental/climate crisis focused government plans the DC Environmental Network has helped inform and support including:

- **Climate Ready DC** summarizes the expected impact of climate change on built infrastructure and community resources. It also outlines 77 adaptation strategies, designed to prepare the District for the impacts of climate change.
- **Clean Energy DC** identifies 55 actions to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions by 50% of 2006 levels by 2032, and 80% of 2006 levels by 2032.
- **Sustainable DC** outlines actions to make DC the healthiest, greenest, most livable city in the country. The Department of Energy and Environment released this plan in 2013 and is currently updating it.

We believe the establishment of the Office of Resiliency would be a strong step toward clearly making resiliency a priority and like what we have seen at DPW's Office of Waste Diversion,

accelerate critical efforts to prepare for the impacts of the climate crisis and bold actions to combat its causes.

Thank you.

*The DC Environmental Network (DCEN), founded in 1996 — is working toward a vision of rebuilding Washington, DC's neighborhoods, and communities for long-term economic and environmental sustainability — accomplishing this by protecting, restoring, and enhancing, the Capital City's urban environment.*