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**RESOLUTION NO. 2016-66**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ALBANY CITY COUNCIL URGING PG&E TO  
ALLOW THE CITY TO SET UTILITY USER TAXES BASED ON  
GREENHOUSE POLLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the average surface temperature on Earth has been increasing steadily, with the ten warmest years ever recorded all occurring since 1998; and

**WHEREAS**, climate scientists overwhelmingly agree that an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere—carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in particular—is causing the increase in global temperature; and

**WHEREAS**, humans burning carbon-based fossil fuels—coal, oil, and natural gas—is the primary cause of the substantial and continuing increase of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere; and

**WHEREAS**, in May, 2013, the global atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> reached 400 parts per million—the highest level in the last 800,000 years; and

**WHEREAS**, it's predicted that by 2100 average global temperature will be 2°F to 11.5°F higher than now depending on the level of future greenhouse gas emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Protection Agency has determined that current and future greenhouse gas concentrations endanger public health, and according to the Global Humanitarian Forum climate change is already responsible every year for some 300,000 deaths, 325 million people seriously affected, and economic losses worldwide of U.S. \$125 billion; and

**WHEREAS**, climate change caused by global warming-related greenhouse gas emissions including CO<sub>2</sub> already is leading to large-scale problems including ocean

1 acidification and rising sea levels; more frequent, extreme, and damaging weather events  
2 such as heat waves, storms, heavy rainfall and flooding, and droughts; more frequent and  
3 intense wildfires; disrupted ecosystems affecting biodiversity and food production; and  
4 an increase in heat related deaths; and

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6 **WHEREAS**, scientists have concluded that by 2100 as many as one in 10 species  
7 may be on the verge of extinction due to climate change; and

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9 **WHEREAS**, rising sea levels, reduced snow pack in the Sierras, and extreme  
10 weather are issues that are beginning to affect the San Francisco Bay Area; sea level rise  
11 in the Bay Area is expected to increase by sixteen inches by 2050 and fifty-five inches by  
12 2100; and miles of shoreline and parks could be underwater, which could result in \$62  
13 billion worth of infrastructure damage in the Bay Area; and

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15 **WHEREAS**, by mid-century, the City of Albany could see three to four times as  
16 many extreme heat days as we do today with related increases in hospitalizations and  
17 deaths, especially for vulnerable populations such as seniors, young children, low-income  
18 households; and

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20 **WHEREAS**, the City of Albany has been a leader in the fight against climate  
21 change, having adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2010, which aims to reduce the city's  
22 carbon emissions to 25% below 2004 baseline emission levels by 2020; and

23  
24 **WHEREAS**, the continued increase in global atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration  
25 requires broader, more powerful policies to reduce emissions; and

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27 **WHEREAS**, as electricity continues to become cleaner with the increase in  
28 renewable sources, policymakers are looking for ways to eliminate natural gas usage to  
29 further reduce greenhouse pollution from building energy use; and

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**WHEREAS**, restructuring Albany’s utility user tax (UUT) rates to reflect greenhouse pollution could further incentivize greenhouse gas reductions; and

**WHEREAS**, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) currently collects Albany’s UUT on electricity and natural gas at the same rate, and their billing system does not currently have the capability to tax them differently; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Albany City Council hereby urges the PG&E to upgrade its billing system to allow for different UUT rates on electricity and natural gas to reflect greenhouse pollution; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Albany City Council commits to considering a restructuring of utility users taxes to reflect greenhouse pollution if this capability becomes available in the future.

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PETER MAASS, MAYOR