

Climate Justice Working Group of the Climate Change Advisory Committee City of Hamilton

On behalf of the Climate Justice Working Group of the Climate Change Advisory Committee, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the opportunity to bring forth our concerns for your consideration. Our group is deeply committed to addressing the multifaceted impacts of climate change, particularly on our most vulnerable residents. We believe that by raising awareness and proposing targeted actions, we can mitigate these effects and promote a more resilient and equitable community. In this spirit, we present our observations and recommendations, hoping to work collaboratively towards a sustainable and just future for all members of our city.

While we have confidence in the overall efforts of the Office of Climate Change Initiatives, we have some concerns regarding the *2024 City-Led Projects Recommended for Climate Change Reserve Funding*.

Although none of us are immune to the impacts of climate change, vulnerable residents in every ward of our city will be disproportionately affected. These individuals face greater risks of illness and death from extreme heat and weather events, poor air quality, increases in vector-borne diseases, and limited or no access to nutritious, locally grown plant-based foods.

We strongly believe that directing available funding toward community adaptation projects will help our city and vulnerable residents to better prepare for and recover from the severe physical and mental health impacts associated with climate change.

After reviewing the 13 projects recommended for funding, with amounts ranging from \$28,500 to \$403,000, we found that very few directly address climate crisis readiness or enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable members of our community. Notably, at least three of the recommended projects are feasibility studies or reviews. We believe that our efforts should now be concentrated on actionable projects rather than additional studies or reviews, as the areas requiring focus and intervention are already well-identified. It is imperative to prioritize initiatives that provide immediate and tangible benefits to those most at risk from the impacts of climate change.

Several projects on the mitigation side have merit and could improve air quality if successful, however, we believe these projects, along with several others, should be funded by other city departments or through special funding streams such as the Green Municipal Fund.

We do recommend a few projects that provide tangible benefits to our community, such as installing air conditioning for people living in City Housing, expanding Macassa Lodge (Macassa Lodge B Wing Expansion – Climate Resilience Measures (CFEM, PW), and implementing a Heat Reclamation project in the Riverdale and Huntington Park pools

(Recreation Centre Pool Heat Reclamation (Corporate Facilities & Energy Management, PW).

It is with respect for the work that has gone into this decision making that we ask for a reconsideration of the \$185,000 to purchase Petro-Canada EcoDiesel™ for the EcoDiesel Fuel Replacement Program (Fleet, PW). This does not appear to meet even the basic criteria for benefiting the most vulnerable members of our community.

We understand this is a first round of decision making with regards to the Climate Change Office and the Climate Change Reserve Funding. However, we firmly believe that there is an opportunity to achieve a greater impact by focusing efforts in the following ways:

- Use a climate justice lens when evaluating projects to ensure that the disparities caused by climate change impacts and the inequities, they exacerbate across communities are effectively addressed.
- Prioritize initiatives targeted to help those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This includes but is not limited to climate change impacts related to flooding, extreme heat, and power outages, as highlighted in the City of Hamilton's Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan (CCIAP).
- Focus on adaptation and resilience projects, aligning with the City's commitment towards building a more resilient community, and to the IPCC's emphasis on applying immediate actions in reducing climate change risks, as outlined in the CCIAP.
- Prioritize funding public and not-for-profit community organization projects to facilitate the delivery to the communities in Hamilton most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief submission. After a careful review of the *2024 City-Led Projects Recommended for Climate Change Reserve Funding* we believe there is room to improve and respectfully ask for consideration of our suggestions. In order to reach the communities most vulnerable to climate change we advise a dedicated outreach approach to target not-for-profit community-based organizations working with vulnerable populations. It would be most helpful if this outreach included assistance with grant writing. We believe our recommendations will positively inform current and future rounds of funding through the Office of Climate Change Initiatives.