



# CITY OF OAKLAND

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#LoveLife

REBECCA KAPLAN  
Vice Mayor  
District At Large

DAN KALB  
Council Member  
District 1

Date: April 14, 2022  
To: Members of City Council and Members of the Public  
From: Vice Mayor Kaplan and Councilmember Kalb  
Re: **Resolution Directing The City Administrator To Review And Analyze Cleaner Alternatives To Diesel Generators To Be Authorized For Backup Power For All Development On City Of Oakland Property And Projects In Which The City Has The Authority To Designate The Type Of Generator To Be Used To Establish A Cleaner Generator Policy That Reduces Harmful Emissions, And To Report Back To Council By September 2022 On The Policy And With Amendments To The Oakland Municipal Code, Planning And Building And Other Codes If Needed**

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Dear Colleagues on the City Council and Members of the Public,

The amount of commercial operations in California relying on large diesel backup generator systems has increased in the last number of years. According to a study conducted by MCubed, between 2018 and 2020, the number of nonresidential backup generators in the Bay Area increased by 34%.<sup>1</sup> More must be done to promote the use of cleaner technology for back-up generators to stem the negative health and environmental impacts of diesel-fueled generators. Therefore, this resolution directs the City Administrator to review cleaner alternatives to diesel generators, which may be authorized for backup power, to reduce harmful emissions, and directs the Administrator to report back to Council by September 2022 should the City require policy changes to implement clean generator authorization.

Pollution from diesel exhaust includes soot, and oxides of nitrogen, which contribute to the production of smog and acid rain, carbon monoxide, and other hazardous air pollutants.<sup>2</sup> These hazardous air pollutants contribute to numerous health impacts including increased hospital admissions, particularly for heart disease, but also for respiratory illnesses. Additionally, small particles of diesel particulate matter can reach deep into the lungs, contributing to a range of health problems, particularly for children and older adults.

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<sup>1</sup> Moss, Steve; Bilich, Andy, [Diesel Back-Up Generator Population Grows Rapidly in the Bay Area and Southern California](#) (M. Cubed, May 2020).

<sup>2</sup> US Environmental Protection Agency, [Diesel Fuel Standards: About Diesel Fuels](#).

Public Works Committee  
April 26, 2022  
File # 22-0167

In total, there are approximately 10,000 permitted diesel engines throughout the Bay Area according to Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) data. Specifically in Oakland, the number of nonresidential backup generators increased from 229 to 348 from 2018 to 2020. Researchers also found 90% of all new nonresidential backup generators in California were diesel-fueled, driving nearly \$136 million in annual health costs during the same study period by MCubed from 2018 to 2020.

BAAQMD's "Best Available Control Technology" regulation requires permit applicants to use the most stringent level of emissions control that either (i) has been successfully achieved by other facilities for similar types of equipment or (ii) is technologically feasible and cost effective. In addition, the City of Oakland requires zoning review, and electrical and plumbing permits in order to install a generator, and for large generators, requires a building permit. That being said, the City, whenever possible, should use its position and authority in land use decisions to further utilize cleaner alternatives to diesel generators.

In order to make generator usage approved by the City safer, and approve cleaner alternatives that reduce emissions compared to diesel generators, this resolution declares the intent of the City to establish a "Cleaner Generator Policy", and directs the City Administrator to review and analyze cleaner alternatives to diesel generators. Additionally, the resolution requires the Administrator to report back to Council by September 2022 should the City require policy changes to implement clean generator authorization.

We respectfully urge your support for this legislation.