

Richmond.com

City Commits to Pollution-Free Standards by 2030

10/4/07

To make the City of Richmond more environmentally friendly for both the community and the Earth, Richmond Mayor L. Douglas Wilder has expressed his commitment to make all City-owned buildings pollution-free within the next 23 years as outlined in the “2030 Challenge.”

“We’re not content with where we are regarding the strong need to reduce greenhouse emissions in order to protect our environment,” said the Mayor. “With the 2030 Challenge report to guide us, we will be setting the example ourselves and not waiting to follow others. We recognize the need to take proactive steps to preserve our environment for future generations.”

Now that Richmond has officially adopted the 2030 challenge, the plan is being presented as a model to other cities and counties throughout the state.

After attending last year’s U.S. Conference of Mayors at which the 2030 Challenge was adopted, the Mayor asked the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to work with organizations across Virginia to develop a plan to achieve Richmond’s goal of becoming pollution-free by the year 2030.

According to AIA, buildings account for one-half of all greenhouse-gas emissions. Many scientists believe these emissions are a major contributor to global warming.

The 2030 Challenge is the brainchild of Architecture 2030, an independent, non-profit organization, founded by New Mexico architect Edward Mazria. The goal of the challenge is to reduce carbon emissions from the building sector to net-zero by the year 2030. Since then, the National Association of County Officials has adopted nearly identical language.

Now that Richmond has officially adopted the challenge, the plan is being presented as a model to other cities and counties throughout the state.

Richmond was designated a “Cool City” in August 2006, when the Mayor signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement which seeks to reduce global warming. The Sierra Club and the Chesapeake Climate Action Network presented a plaque of appreciation to the Mayor at that time.

To become more environmentally friendly, City has already undertaken energy efficiency and conservation measures that include:

- Reduced the City’s fleet by 25 percent, or 500 vehicles
- Fleet vehicles now use regular gasoline only, at an annual savings of \$140,000
- T-8 lights and motion detection lights are used to reduce energy usage
- City’s vehicle usage policy restricts idling for extended periods of time
- Purchase of “hybrid” vehicles and training staff mechanics to service them
- Installation of long-lasting LED light-emitting devices at new traffic lights is reducing energy consumption by 80 percent
- Installing computerized, energy-efficient HVAC systems
- Timing of stop lights reduces the number of vehicles stops, producing less emissions
- Promoting utility conservation through consumer education outreach