

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the existence of an emergency, with respect to the need declare the sense of the Council that the Interagency Council on Homelessness' Winter Plan of 2014-2015 will not meet the shelter needs of homeless families this winter.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Sense of the Council Regarding the Adequacy of the 2014-2015 Winter Plan Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2014".

Sec. 2. (a) The Winter Plan is prepared annually by the Interagency Council on Homelessness to plan for the needs of homeless individuals and families for each coming winter, in view of the fact that the District is legally required to provide shelter for individuals and families on any hypothermic night.

(b) The 2014-2015 Winter Plan, which was approved by unanimous vote on September 2, 2014, projects the need for shelter for 840 families, which represents a 16% increase over the number of families that needed shelter during the 2013-2014 hypothermia season.

(c) As of September 2, 2014, the Winter Plan identifies a shelter inventory of only 409 family units, 431 families short of the projected need.

(d) The Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005 ("HSRA"), requires that whenever the actual or forecasted temperature, including the wind chill factor, falls below

32 32 degrees F., the District of Columbia must make available appropriate space in District  
33 public or private buildings and facilities for any person in the District who is homeless  
34 and cannot access other shelter.

35 (e) During the 2013-2014 hypothermia season, November 1, 2013 –March 31,  
36 2014, the actual temperature fell to 32 degrees F. or below on 72 of the 151 days of the  
37 hypothermia season. By calendar month, this represented 7 days in November, 10 in  
38 December, 23 in January, 18 in February; and 14 in March. Furthermore, on 110 days,  
39 the wind chill fell below 32 degrees F. The wind chill was below zero degrees F. on 7  
40 days, at zero degrees F. on 2 additional days, with the lowest wind chill measuring -11  
41 degrees F. Finally, precipitation of some kind was recorded on 67 days, with snow, sleet,  
42 flurries, and freezing rain occurred on at least 15 days. Exceptional wind gusts caused  
43 additional hardship on several days.

44 (f) The unpredictably severe winter of 2013-2014 left the District unprepared to  
45 meet the needs of the burgeoning numbers of homeless families in need of shelter. With  
46 the number of hypothermia alerts already issued in the current hypothermia season, there  
47 is every reason to expect that the District must be significantly better prepared during this  
48 hypothermia season to sufficiently serve the need of its homeless families.

49 (g) However, despite the harsh lessons of last year:

50 (1) The 2014-2015 Interagency Council on Homelessness' ("ICH")  
51 Winter Plan provisions regarding homeless families does not appear adequate to meet the  
52 anticipated demand for the District to provide shelter for the homeless families during the  
53 2014-2015 hypothermia season.

54 (2) As the Mayor has not yet provided a plan or budget that will address  
55 the needs of homeless residents in great crisis, including the most vulnerable families in  
56 the District, the District will likely fail to fulfill its legal requirement to provide  
57 appropriate shelter for homeless families during the winter of 2014-2015.

58 (3) Despite repeated requests by the Committee on Human Services, the  
59 executive has neither provided the Committee the detailed information requested about  
60 plans to meet over half the anticipated need for the District to provide legally required  
61 shelter for the District's homeless families, nor has the executive provided the Committee  
62 with the requested budget information related to the provision of these services.

63 (h) Therefore, already more than one month into the 2014-2015 hypothermia  
64 season, the Council must immediately express its concern that the ICH Winter Plan will  
65 be inadequate to meet the shelter needs of homeless families this winter.

66 (i) It is the expectation of the Council that this emergency resolution will compel  
67 the executive to fulfill its legal obligation to meet the shelter needs of homeless families  
68 during this 2014-2015 hypothermia season.

69 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the  
70 circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it  
71 necessary that the "Sense of the Council Regarding the Adequacy of the 2014-2015  
72 Winter Plan Emergency Resolution of 2014" be adopted on an emergency basis.

73 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.