

VOTE TO STOP ~~COP CITY~~

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‘Vote to Stop Cop City’ Coalition Launches Referendum Campaign to Put Cop City on the Ballot in Atlanta

The coalition of organizers, residents, and advocacy groups today launched a new phase in the fight against Cop City to let Atlanta voters have their voices heard.

Atlanta, GA – Today, in light of the failures of the Atlanta City Council and Mayor to listen to Atlanta residents, a broad coalition of Atlanta voters, organizers, and community leaders launched a bold campaign to put Cop City on the November ballot, letting residents truly make their voices heard and decide for themselves.

On Monday and Tuesday, over 400 Atlantans spoke against Cop City for a combined 15 hours of public comment, but the City Council refused to hear their demands, and passed funding for the dangerous project just before 5:30 am. Now, organizers are fighting back, launching a public referendum for the City of Atlanta to repeal the lease to the Atlanta Police Foundation and take back the power of the residents to choose our path. Over the next two months, organizers will gather tens of thousands of signatures to achieve the 75,000 necessary to qualify for the referendum process, building a more educated, engaged, and empowered city by taking the decision directly to Atlanta voters.

Speakers at the press conference included:

- Nsé Ufot, community organizer
- Kamau Franklin, organizer and community leader
- Gary Spencer, Senior Counsel, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
- Scarlett Mayoralgo, Southeast Organizer, Working Families Power
- Teetee Clark, Atlanta resident

“Cop City is more of a military stronghold than a training facility,” said R. Gary Spencer, Senior Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. “The Atlanta community has repeatedly drawn attention to the serious harms posed by Cop City, including environmental damage and the dangers of a militarized police force that have the potential of impacting the everyday lives of Black Atlantans. But instead of addressing these concerns, Georgia officials have responded with police violence, targeted arrests, and unduly harsh

charging decisions. As a result, Atlantans have witnessed the police killing of Manuel ‘Tortuguita’ Esteban Paez Terán, domestic terrorism charges against activists based on tenuous evidence, and felony charges against protestors for simply distributing flyers. Cop City symbolizes the failures of a public safety system that continues to weaponize law enforcement against communities rather than invest in resources that would actually produce the safety and stability they need. The voice of the people has been repeatedly ignored, so it is time for the residents of Atlanta to exercise their political will and decide the fate of Cop City. This referendum does just that.”

“The Atlanta City Council has again turned its back on working class, particularly Black, Atlantans,” **said Kamau Franklin**. “The overwhelming majority of people opposed Cop City but the city council chose again to side with the police & corporations to continue to criminalize our community — which is why it is time for the people of Atlanta to decide.”

“Atlanta’s working families overwhelmingly oppose Cop City. It will disrupt their communities and environment, and lead to greater fear of police across the city and country. It is shameful that Atlanta City Council continues to ignore that and goes against the will of their citizens,” **said Britney Whaley, Regional Director of Working Families Power**. “If the city council won’t stand up for its people, then the people must stand up for themselves—and that’s exactly what we are doing with this ballot measure.”

“The Atlanta City Council has made clear that it has no desire to respect the will of the people towards Cop City. So it’s time we take the issue out of their hands and put it back where it belongs—with the people. Come November, Atlantans will vote no on Cop City,” **said the Center for Popular Democracy**. “We have been proud to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with Atlanta’s powerful activists for justice, battling forces in that state’s GOP supermajority who are hellbent on resurrecting Jim Crow policies. And we’ll continue bringing our organizing muscle to the fight to stop Cop City!”

While the City Council has failed us, Atlantans will now have the power to choose for themselves the path forward, and cancel the lease for Cop City. The Vote to Stop Cop City coalition will break new ground in the authentic community work that Atlanta’s leaders refuse to do. Atlanta is our city, and this is our choice.

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