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# This is the policy platform behind those two sustainable business bills

By [Tony Abraham](#) / STAFF

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**L**ast week, Councilwoman **Maria Quiñones-Sánchez** introduced two bills she claims could move Philadelphia toward becoming the “[B Corp capital of the world](#).”

The first bill would expand the **Sustainable Business Tax Credit**, which provides tax incentives for businesses to become certified **B Corps** or adopt sustainable practices.

The second would expand the existing incentives provided to startups through the city’s [Jump Start Philadelphia](#) (<http://www.phila.gov/commerce/Documents/Jump%20Start%20Philly.pdf>) program by offering an additional year of tax exemptions.

The two bills will move to a public hearing in a council committee — likely the Committee on Finance, according to **Sustainable Business Network** Policy and Advocacy Manager **Saleem Chapman** — where it will need a majority rule before heading to the desk of Mayor **Jim Kenney**.

The proposed legislation is a result of a [year of advocacy](#) (<http://generocity.org/philly/2015/04/09/join-us-for-the-good-economy-tweet-chat-with-city-council/>) on behalf of SBN. It’s one leg of the **Good Economy Challenge** ([http://www.sbnphiladelphia.org/images/uploads/The%20SBN%20Good%20Economy%20Challenge%2011\\_27\\_15.pdf](http://www.sbnphiladelphia.org/images/uploads/The%20SBN%20Good%20Economy%20Challenge%2011_27_15.pdf)) a five-piece policy platform the network developed in 2015:

- ✓ Make Philadelphia legislation more startup and small-business-friendly.
- ✓ Push the city and local anchor institutions to provide more procurement opportunities for locally owned businesses.
- ✓ Advance the city’s **Green City, Clean Waters** ([http://www.phillywatersheds.org/what\\_were\\_doing/documents\\_and\\_data/cso\\_long\\_term\\_control\\_plan](http://www.phillywatersheds.org/what_were_doing/documents_and_data/cso_long_term_control_plan)) program by creating green stormwater infrastructure jobs.
- ✓ Create incentives for the adoption of local solar.
- ✓ Create more incentives for businesses to become sustainable.

“All five areas had a number of legislative and administrative recommendations connected to them,” said SBN Executive Director **Jamie Gauthier**. “These pieces that [Quiñones-Sánchez] put forward the other day were included in that last plank of the platform around incentivizing more businesses to act sustainably.”

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The Good Economy Challenge was pushed heavily by SBN and its members [during mayoral and council primaries \(http://generocity.org/philly/2015/04/27/mayoral-candidates-weigh-in-on-goodeconomyphilly/\)](http://generocity.org/philly/2015/04/27/mayoral-candidates-weigh-in-on-goodeconomyphilly/). Once the new council session began earlier this year, the agenda was again shopped throughout council by Chapman to see which council members would be amenable to which pieces of the platform.

Quiñones-Sánchez, Gauthier said, expressed interest and excitement around the sustainable business piece. Once SBN circled back with her, she immediately followed up.

If the bills pass, they could be used as an attraction tool to lure sustainable businesses and B Corps inside the city limits. Regardless of whether or not that happens, the fact the two bills even exist means a few things, according to Gauthier.

- ✓ **It's public acknowledgement** — "It represents our community's particular perspective on business as a force of good in the world," Gauthier said.
- ✓ **It's a boon for the community** — "It's not a huge tax credit," she said. "But it is a small way of recognizing benefits of those businesses in terms of the way they hire and pay and the way they contribute in a positive way to both the environment and the communities they exist within."
- ✓ **It's a beacon** — "It's a way of bringing visibility to the topic of sustainable businesses and the B Corp model," she said. "It's a way of allowing more business owners to learn what it's about and how it can benefit their business."

Now, it's the sustainable business and B Corp communities' responsibility to make their voices heard.

"I think our role now is to provide support," Gauthier said. "We'll continue to communicate and build support amongst our community for what's happening."



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*Tony Abraham is Generocity's lead reporter. Formerly a reporter with sister-site Technical.ly, Tony also occasionally writes for Red Bull Amaphiko and WHYY Newsworks. Though he lives on his Twitter timeline, the Temple University alumnus calls Fishtown home.*

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