

Focus on: Gov. Jay Inslee's 2020 Climate Change Investments



Why it matters

Research from the University of Washington has shown the impacts that climate change will have on our state, unless we reduce emissions sharply. In a 2019 report, the University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group found that warming by just 1.5 degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, will mean a 38% decline in Washington's snowpack, a 23% drop in summer stream flows, and a 1.4-foot rise in sea level.

Those changes will mean major challenges to our state's water supplies, hydroelectric power generation, and coastal economies.

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Governor's proposed 2020 supplemental budget

Gov. Jay Inslee has proposed aggressive steps to curb carbon pollution in Washington in order to prevent the impacts that climate change will have on our state. The Governor is supporting new legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, and new policies to ensure that climate change impacts are fully evaluated as part of reviewing proposed projects. The Governor's budget includes funding for the Washington Department of Ecology to implement these priorities.

Clean fuels standard

Transportation is far and away the largest category of greenhouse gas emissions in Washington—accounting for almost 45 percent of total emissions. A Clean Fuels Standard reduces carbon pollution by requiring fuel suppliers to gradually decrease the carbon intensity of the fuels sold in the state. This can take the form of using renewable fuel sources, such as natural gas captured at landfills, or by supporting programs to increase the number of zero-emission electric vehicles sold in the state. California, Oregon and British Columbia all have adopted clean fuels standards.

Gov. Inslee supports passage of a Clean Fuels Standard, and his budget includes \$1.458 million for Ecology to implement the program once legislation is passed.

Zero-emission vehicles

Today, there are more models of electric vehicles available than ever. However, many of these cars are not available in Washington State. That's because Washington has not adopted a zero-emission vehicle, or

ZEV, standard. A ZEV standard is designed to expand the number and variety of electric and fuel cell vehicles available to the public, and to reduce the carbon pollution coming from cars and trucks. Of the 16 states that have adopted California's vehicle emission standards, all but three have also adopted the ZEV component of those requirements. The ZEV program requires that an increasing percentage of all vehicles offered for sale in a state qualify as ZEVs. Gov. Inslee supports passage of a ZEV standard, and his budget includes \$149,000 for Ecology to implement a ZEV program in Washington once it is approved by the legislature.

Updating Washington's greenhouse gas emission limits

In 2008, the Legislature adopted statewide targets for future greenhouse gas emissions. The same legislation required Ecology to recommend updates to these targets to reflect the [latest climate science from the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group](#) and the [United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#). In 2019, Ecology issued [a report recommending that emissions be reduced by 45% below 1990 levels by 2030, to 70% below 1990 levels by 2040, and to 95% below 1990 levels by 2050](#), with the remaining emissions offset so that the state is carbon neutral. Ecology found these cuts were necessary to avoid the most severe impacts of climate change on our water supplies, coastlines, and environment. Gov. Inslee is requesting legislation to update the emissions targets consistent with this recommendation, and his budget includes funding to implement the legislation.

Clean energy transformation

In 2019, the Washington Legislature passed the Clean Energy Transformation Act, which requires all electricity used in the state to be carbon neutral by 2030, and to come completely from non-emitting sources by 2045. Although the lead agencies in implementing the Act are the Department of Commerce and the Utilities and Transportation Commission, Ecology also has a role in determining how much carbon pollution is emitted by different energy sources, and in writing rules to guide clean energy projects that utilities can use to meet some of the Act's requirements. Gov. Inslee's budget includes \$502,000 for Ecology to continue this work.

Climate change assessments

Under Washington's environmental review law, the State Environmental Policy Act, permitting agencies are required to evaluate all impacts on the environment from proposed projects. In December 2019, Gov. Inslee directed Ecology to develop uniform, comprehensive standards to guide future assessments of how major projects would affect climate change, and standardized tools to evaluate proposed mitigation options. Gov. Inslee's budget includes \$2.34 million for Ecology to complete this rulemaking process, which will improve transparency and ensure the use of the best available science. Gov. Inslee's budget also includes \$600,000 for Ecology to complete a second supplemental environmental impact statement on a proposed methanol refinery in Kalama.

Reducing emissions from rideshare vehicles

Rideshare companies, also known as "transportation network companies," have quickly become an important part of the transportation systems in most major metropolitan areas. As these companies grow, they have a responsibility to develop plans to work with their drivers to reduce emissions. Gov. Inslee is supporting legislation to require rideshare companies to develop emission reduction plans, and his budget includes \$384,000 for Ecology to implement the program.

Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-407-6831 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.