

# Focus on: Implementing a clean fuel standard



## Reducing greenhouse gases can't wait

Climate change poses an urgent threat to Washington's water supplies, coastlines, forests, and economy. To address this threat, the 2020 Washington Legislature adopted new greenhouse gas emissions limits in RCW 70A.45.020:

- 2020 – Emissions to equal 1990 levels of 90.5 million tons of carbon dioxide.
- 2030 - Reduce emissions 45% below 1990 levels.
- 2040 - Reduce emissions 70% below 1990 levels.
- 2050 - Reduce emissions 95% below 1990 levels and achieve net zero emissions.

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## Reducing carbon pollution from transportation

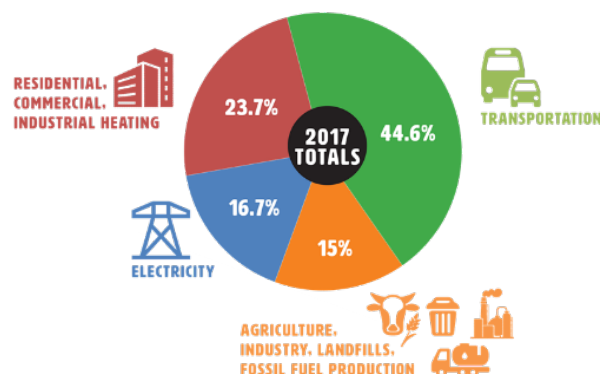
Gov. Jay Inslee has proposed a bold package of climate policies and investments for the 2021-2023 biennium to curb carbon pollution in Washington and prevent the impacts that climate change will have on our state ([www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ClimateBrief-Dec2020.pdf](http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ClimateBrief-Dec2020.pdf)). A key component of this package is addressing emissions from transportation, the largest category of emissions at almost 45 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in Washington.

To achieve this goal, Governor Inslee has introduced Clean Fuel Standard legislation in the 2021 session. A Clean Fuel 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 fuels, such as biodiesel or natural gas captured at landfills, or by supporting programs to increase the number of zero-emission vehicles in the state.

It is estimated that in Washington, implementing a Clean Fuel Standard will reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by 2.7 million metric tons a year by 2030.

California, Oregon, and British Columbia all have adopted their own clean fuel standards.

The Governor's budget includes \$2.85 million and 8.3 FTEs for the Department of Ecology to adopt rules and



## Washington's climate policies

In recent years, Washington State has taken aggressive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the damage climate change will cause to our state's water supplies, coastlines, forests, and industries. However, the latest research shows that we need to reduce emissions more – and to do it faster – if we are to limit this damage. Major recent climate policies include:

### 2020

**Zero emission vehicles standard** - Requires more electric and zero-emission vehicles to be sold in Washington.

**Greenhouse gas emissions** - Sets new emission limits for 2030, 2040 and 2050.

### 2019

**Clean Energy Transformation Act** - Requires utilities to use only renewable and non-emitting electricity sources by 2045.

**Hydrofluorocarbons** - Phases out major uses of hydrofluorocarbons, which are potent greenhouse gases.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions Evaluation

Gov. Inslee directed Ecology to develop rules to strengthen and standardize greenhouse gas analyses in environmental assessments for major projects.

implement the program, starting no later than Jan. 1, 2023. This includes developing a registration system for fossil fuel producers and clean fuel providers, as well as tracking and monitoring compliance.

## How a clean fuel standard works

Clean fuels are a simple idea: They are fuels that pollute less than conventional gas and diesel. A Clean Fuel Standard sets limits on the amount of carbon pollution emitted from the fuels we use for transportation, known as the “carbon intensity” of the fuel.

The carbon intensity is based on the full emissions for a given fuel type over its complete lifecycle, including production, transportation, and consumption of the fuel, and any changes in land use that may result from increased demand for biofuels. The carbon intensity limits are lowered over time to achieve a reduction of 10% below 2017 levels by 2028, and a 20% reduction below 2017 levels by 2035. Fuel producers and importers are required to meet these limits, and can accomplish this in a variety of ways:

- Produce low-carbon fuels.
- Blend biodiesel or ethanol into gasoline or diesel.
- Purchase credits generated by low-carbon fuel providers.
- Improve the efficiency of the fuel production processes.

A 2014 study by the Washington Office of Financial Management found that there is an ample supply of clean fuels already on the market to meet Washington's needs under a Clean Fuel Standard.

## Benefits beyond climate change

Washington businesses are already major suppliers of clean fuels, including biodiesel and renewable natural gas. Today, however, most of those fuels are sold out of state – taking their emissions benefits with them. With a Clean Fuel Standard, Washington would see growth in jobs, innovation, and investment.

The Clean Fuel Standard would also require electric utilities to use a portion of the credit revenue generated under the program from selling electricity to charge electric vehicles to benefit areas impacted by air pollution or disproportionately impacted communities.

## 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.