



Improving Air Quality in Overburdened Communities Initiative

June Update 2022

Background

Ecology's Air Quality Program is working to implement a new air quality initiative aimed at expanding air quality monitoring and reducing air pollution in communities that bear a disproportionate burden of pollution today. This environmental justice focus is a key part of the Climate Commitment Act, the 2021 law that establishes a cap-and-invest program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Washington.

Timeline Update

We are shifting the timeline for the next stage of public engagement, where we will share the draft criteria to identify overburdened communities highly impacted by air pollution, to honor the capacity of the newly formed Environmental Justice Council, community leaders, and the public at large to engage with the various Climate Commitment Act processes.

Ecology strives for the process to identify overburdened communities highly impacted by air pollution to be an equitable process that reflects the lived experiences of community members. We also want to provide time for the Environmental Justice Council, other community organizations and the public time to digest the elements of the process.

Themes from First Public Comment Period

Ecology held the first public comment period to hear about peoples' lived experiences with air quality and what they would like to see prioritized in Ecology's process to identify overburdened communities for

this initiative. The three-month comment period went from January-March and included eight public and community group listening sessions, as well as a survey, and a comment map. Ecology used the comments regarding air quality and socioeconomic factors that we heard to develop the draft criteria to identify overburdened communities highly impacted by air pollution. Here are some of the common themes we heard:

Air quality

- Transportation
- Agriculture and livestock
- Land use/zoning
- Ports
- Wildfire smoke
- Dust
- Smoke from outdoor burning & wood stoves
- Stationary facilities
 - E.g. industrial, landfills, cement, etc.
- Cumulative impacts
- Interaction with high heat

Socioeconomics

- Health disparities
- Race
- Income
- Outdoor workers
- Unhoused people
- Age – children and older adults

Ideas for change

- Education
- Regulation
- Grant programs
- Increased access to air quality information

Outside our scope

These issue areas could not be integrated into the draft criteria as they are outside the scope of air quality issues that Ecology is directed to focus on in the Climate Commitment Act:

- Odor
- Air toxics
- Indoor air quality
- Methane

Next Steps

Ecology will reach out again in late summer with a timeline update for the next engagement opportunity to provide feedback on the draft criteria to identify overburdened communities highly impacted by air pollution. We greatly appreciate your time and the valuable insight your feedback provides to this process.

Find Out More

Learn more about this initiative on our website by visiting ecology.wa.gov/overburdened. Translated materials are available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Russian.



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To request ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6800 or email at melanie.forester.ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.