

Focus on: Air Quality Environmental Justice Report

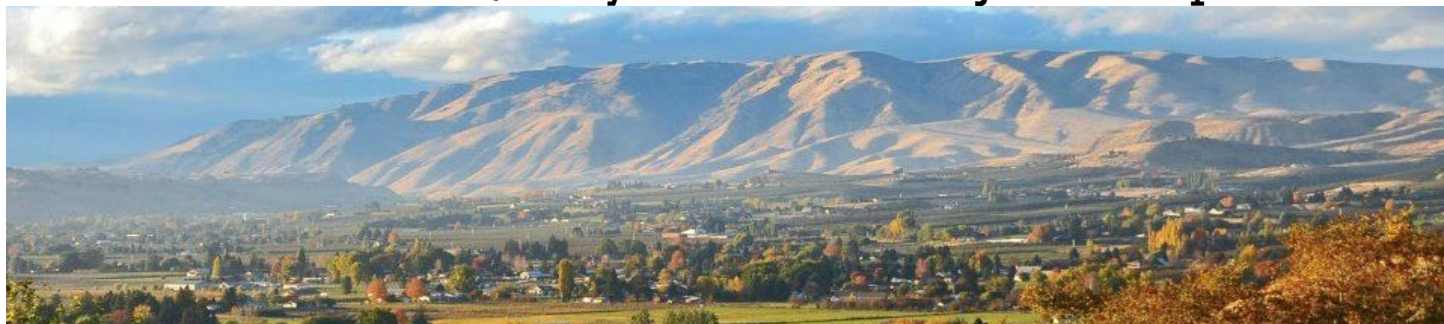


Figure 1. Yakima Valley

Overview

Ecology is working to better understand and improve air quality in [16 overburdened communities](#) highly impacted by air pollution.¹ The environmental justice provisions in the Climate Commitment Act (CCA) direct this work. We are engaging with communities and Tribes as we:

- Expand Washington’s air monitoring network.
- Provide community funding and develop strategies to reduce air pollution.

Key findings

Every two years, we must evaluate and publish criteria air pollution levels, related health impacts, and greenhouse gas emissions for each of the 16 overburdened areas. We completed our first review in December 2023. This initial report provides a baseline of data about air pollution, health impacts, and greenhouse gas emissions in the 16 communities at the onset of the CCA.

	Overburdened communities	Statewide
Number of days per year of unhealthy air quality (between 2020 and 2022)	7.5 days per year	6.7 days per year
People over 65: risk of dying from breathing fine particles (PM _{2.5}) emitted by human-caused sources (excludes wildfire smoke)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of dying is twice as high • People of color more likely to die than white people 	Less likely overall to die from breathing fine particles
Life span	2.4 years shorter (combination of health, environmental, socioeconomic risk factors & more exposure to air pollution)	2.4 years longer
Air pollutant of greatest concern	Fine particles (PM _{2.5})	Fine particles (PM _{2.5})
Health impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher mortality rate associated with PM_{2.5} • Higher risk of respiratory and heart disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower mortality rate associated with PM_{2.5} • Lower risk of respiratory and heart disease

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/overburdened-communities>

Greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49 in or nearby (within 3 miles) overburdened communities Emitted 3.5 million metric tons of GHG, excluding natural CO₂ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 166 statewide Emitted 22.7 million metric tons of GHG, excluding natural CO₂
Greenhouse gas (GHG) mobile source emissions estimates	6 million metric tons of GHG, with an average of 6.3 metric tons of GHG per capita	40.3 million metric tons of GHG

Additional findings

- The health impacts of PM_{2.5} exposure differ between and within the overburdened communities.
- Nearly half the GHG-reporting facilities in or nearby the overburdened communities are participating in Washington's new Cap-and-Invest Program, which funds programs that address air pollution.

Community-specific information

More detail about each community is in the [full report](#) (starting on page 47).²

- Ellensburg:** page 115
- Everett:** page 128
- George and West Grant County:** page 112
- South King County:** page 154
- Mattawa:** page 107
- Moxee Valley:** page 103
- Northeast Puyallup:** page 164
- North Seattle and Shoreline:** page 134
- South Seattle:** page 140
- Spokane and Spokane Valley:** page 63
- South and East Tacoma:** page 171
- Tri-Cities to Wallula:** page 75
- Vancouver:** page 182
- Wenatchee and East Wenatchee:** page 122
- Lower Yakima Valley:** page 95
- East Yakima:** page 86



Figure 2. Outdoor workers are especially at risk from air pollution, the report found

Related Links

- [Focus on: Improving Air Quality in Overburdened Communities, March 2023](#)
- [Storymap \(web map to learn more about the communities\)](#)
- [Focus on: SensWA, Nov. 2023](#)



Susan Woodward

susan.woodward@ecy.wa.gov

360-688-8070



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² <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2302115.html>