

Focus on: Grants to Reduce Methane Emissions from Landfills



Figure 1. Landfill in Washington with Mount Rainier in background

Methane: a potent greenhouse gas

Reducing methane emissions is crucial to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change. It is:

- The second most abundant human-caused greenhouse gas (GHG) in the atmosphere.
- More than 80 times more powerful trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide over its first 20 years.¹
- Responsible for more than 25% of the global warming experienced today.

Methane emissions from landfills

Methane is a gas produced in landfills by decomposing organic material, such as food scraps, cardboard, and yard trimmings. If there are no systems in place to capture these methane emissions, the gas escapes into the atmosphere, accelerating the warming that leads to climate change. In Washington, landfills are a significant source of methane emissions. However, the methane emissions these landfills produce can be collected, treated, and converted into a non-polluting, renewable gas.

New grant program

In 2023, the State Legislature appropriated \$9.6M from Climate Commitment Act funds to help municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill owners comply with standards in a new [Landfills-Methane Emissions law \(Chapter 70A.540 RCW\)](#).² Ecology will distribute these funds through a new grant program to help landfill owners and operators pay for expenses associated with complying with the law. Costs could include design, planning, installing or upgrading gas collection and control systems, increasing surface emissions monitoring, as well as other requirements.

We want to hear from you!

Ecology will share proposed grant guidelines for public comment in spring 2024. The proposed guidelines will include information about eligible applicants, projects, and costs; evaluation and scoring criteria; and funding amounts. Feedback may inform final grant guidelines.



[Sign up to receive emails](#)³ about the comment period and the grant program.

¹ IPCC AR6, WG 1, The Physical Science Basis at 7-125.

² <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.540>

³ <https://ecy.wa.gov/landfill-methane-emails>

What is Washington doing to reduce methane emissions from landfills?

Addressing the methane emissions emitted by landfills is an important part of our statewide commitment to limit greenhouse gas emissions by 95% by 2050. In 2022, the State Legislature passed the [Organics Management Law](#)⁴ and the [Landfills-Methane Emissions law](#).⁵ These laws work together to reduce organic materials from entering landfills and the emissions produced from the decomposing material already in the landfills.

Related Information

- [Landfill Methane Emissions Reduction Grant](#)⁶
- [Stay informed: sign up to receive emails](#)⁷
- [Landfill compliance: read the rules](#)⁸
- [Blog: The trash-climate connection: what you need to know](#)⁹
- [Blog: What happens in a landfill, doesn't stay in a landfill](#)¹⁰



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⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/waste-toxics/reducing-recycling-waste/organics-and-food-waste/2022-organics-management-law> (Chapter 70A.205 RCW)

⁵ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.540>

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/lfmethane>

⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/landfill-methane-emails>

⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/WAC-173-408>

⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/february-2023/the-trash-climate-connection-what-you-need-to-know>

¹⁰ <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/december-2023/what-happens-in-a-landfill-does-not-stay-in-a-landfill>