

Share your comments: Cap-and-Invest linkage agreement

As directed by the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), the Washington Department of Ecology is seeking to [link Washington's Cap-and-Invest carbon market](#) with the California-Québec market in order to strengthen our efforts to fight climate change and reduce air pollution. We developed a [draft Washington-California-Québec linkage agreement](#) and we'd like your input.

The agreement is just one piece of the linkage puzzle. To link, we'll also need to finish making regulatory changes that make our markets compatible, finalize the Environmental Justice Assessment, and do a final assessment of how linkage would affect Washington's communities, economy, and climate goals. California and Québec would have to take additional steps, too.

What is a linkage agreement?

The linkage agreement sets expectations for information sharing, cooperation, and accounting. It's non-binding and *does not* create new regulations or change existing ones—that can only be done through legislation or rulemaking, and each jurisdiction has full control over their own regulations.

Share your thoughts on the draft Washington-California-Québec linkage agreement

Over the past year, Ecology has been in discussions with the other two jurisdictions to develop a linkage agreement. We used the current agreement between California and Québec as our starting point for developing a new agreement that includes Washington.

We'll consider your comments as we develop a final linkage agreement, and make a decision whether to sign the agreement and link.



Please review the [draft Washington-California-Québec linkage agreement](#) and share your feedback by May 1, 2026.

Attend a public hearing

We're holding two public hearings to share information about the linkage agreement, answer questions, and listen to your comments. Please click the dates below to register.

- [April 22, 2026 from 9 to 11 a.m.](#)
- [April 27, 2026 from 1 to 3 p.m.](#)

Submit written comment

Please submit comments by May 1, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.

- [Online comment form](#)
- Mailed to:
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Frequently Asked Questions

What's in the Washington-California-Québec linkage agreement?

- An acknowledgment that the agreement does not modify existing laws and regulations, nor obligate jurisdictions to create new ones
- A commitment to use proceeds from their programs to provide benefits to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities
- Expectations and a process for regularly communicating, consulting, and coordinating on topics including: program regulations, offset protocols, market integrity, and enforcement
- A process for resolving differences
- A commitment to holding joint auctions, accepting allowances and offset credits from linked jurisdictions, and using a common registry and auction platform, as allowed under each jurisdiction's regulations
- An expectation that offset protocols lead to emissions reductions that are real, additional, quantifiable, permanent, verifiable, and enforceable
- An agreed upon and transparent accounting mechanism that attributes greenhouse gas reductions to each jurisdiction and avoids double-counting
- Confidentiality obligations and information sharing
- Processes for amending the agreement, adding new jurisdictions, and withdrawing



How will linkage impact Washington?

We expect linkage to lead to more consistent allowance prices than what we'd see in a standalone Washington market. With more stable prices, businesses can better plan investments in emissions reductions.

Our program does not need to be identical to California's and Québec's to link. For example, if we linked, Washington's limits on greenhouse gases would stay intact, and offset credits would still be restricted and '[under the cap.](#)' Washington could still change its regulations, and the Legislature would retain authority over how CCA revenue is spent.

After extensive analysis and public engagement, we found that linking with California and Québec would achieve the purposes and meet the linkage criteria in the CCA. Our "[Linkage criteria draft findings](#)" includes our analysis on each of the criteria and a summary of the input we received.

How is Ecology considering environmental justice?

We shared a "[Draft Environmental Justice Assessment](#)" on how linkage could potentially impact Tribes and overburdened communities. We're using this information to help us make informed decisions to reduce environmental harms and to address environmental and health disparities.

The CCA additionally has several [provisions to address environmental justice concerns](#). These policies will stay in place if we link.

What are the next steps for the linkage agreement?

We'll consider your comments as we finalize our assessments, develop a final linkage agreement, and make a decision whether to sign the agreement and link. Depending on the outcome of these steps, we may sign on to a linkage agreement, which we believe is likely to be finalized in 2026.

Sign up for [CCA email alerts](#) to stay up-to-date. Visit the [linkage webpage](#) for more information.



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To request an ADA accommodation or translation, contact Ecology at 360-742-1153 or CCAQuestions@ecy.wa.gov. Dial 711 to call through the WA Telecommunications Relay for services like text telephone (TTY).