

# **Focus on Leading the Way on Climate Change: The Challenge of Our Time Interim Report**

The report “Leading the Way on Climate Change: The Challenge of Our Time” summarizes the initial work of the Climate Advisory Team (CAT) and the Preparation/Adaptation Working Groups (PAWGs) on how Washington can reduce its contribution to global greenhouse gas levels and prepare for the inevitable impacts of climate change. The report also provides updates on other local, state and regional actions in response to the Governor’s Executive Order 07-02, Washington’s Climate Change Challenge.

## **What the Report Does and What it Doesn’t Do**

The interim report is in response to the Governor’s Climate Change Challenge. It does not provide specific direction at the field level. Instead, it provides recommendations from the CAT, the PAWGs, and the citizen engagement stakeholders that represent the best thinking of a wide variety of Washingtonians.

State leaders and policy makers can use the recommendations to develop clear paths to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, growing the clean economy, and preparing for unavoidable impacts of climate change.

Acting on the recommendations will set in motion Washington’s transition to a clean economy, sending signals to motivate entrepreneurs, investors, businesses and individuals to pursue opportunities, technologies, and choices that reduce carbon. The interim report finds implementing the reduction strategies that were analyzed would result in an overall net cost benefit to the state of nearly \$1 billion by 2020.

The report also contains updates on actions the state is currently taking to reduce the state’s greenhouse gas emissions and to create good paying clean energy jobs. It highlights regional efforts of the Western Climate Initiative to develop market-based mechanisms as well as local governments’ efforts to reduce their carbon footprint. And as an “interim” report, it acknowledges that there is still more work to be done.

## **Developing the Climate Change Challenge**

### **Climate Advisory Team**

The 27 member Climate Advisory Team developed recommendations that will help Washington meet its emissions and economic goals. Together, these recommendations provide a framework for further action.

1. Build market-based mechanisms to unleash the creativity and innovation that will deliver cost-effective emission reductions.

2. Set up reporting systems to measure, track and acknowledge progress in emission reductions.
3. Analyze greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation options early in decision-making, planning processes and development projects.
4. Invest in worker training for the emerging clean economy to ensure having a skilled work force and meaningful employment opportunities throughout the state.
5. Build and continue to redesign communities that offer real and reliable alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.
6. Ensure Washington has vehicles that are as efficient as possible and use non-carbon or lower carbon intensity fuels developed sustainably from regional resources.
7. Focus investments in Washington's transportation infrastructure to prioritize moving people and goods cleanly and efficiently.
8. Design, build, upgrade, and operate new and existing buildings and equipment to maximize energy efficiency.
9. Deliver energy from lower or non-carbon sources and more efficient use of fuels.
10. Restore and retain the health and vitality of Washington's farms and forest lands to increase carbon sequestration and storage in forests and forest products, reduce the releases of greenhouse gas emissions, and support the provision of biomass fuels and energy.
11. Reduce waste and Washington's emissions of greenhouse gasses through improved product choices and resource stewardship.
12. Allocate sufficient state resources to maintain Washington's leadership role regionally and nationally and to fulfill its responsibilities for structuring and guiding implementation of emission reduction strategies.

Read the overview of the interim report from the CAT at: [www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0801004.pdf](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0801004.pdf)

### **Preparation and Adaptation Working Groups**

Climate change requires us to open up planning and decision making to new ways of thinking and new possibilities. While greenhouse gas reduction strategies are essentially the same in any state or nation, the impacts of climate change on a given state or region are driven largely by the geography of the area. That means that steps to prepare and adapt have to be tailored to local realities.

The seven initial strategies listed below were developed by five Preparation and Adaptation Working Groups (PAWGs) based on information that's available today. Future strategies will need to be developed as more information on impacts specific to Washington state is developed. By taking steps to prepare the state for climate change impacts, Washington can increase the likelihood that that the state's citizens will prosper in a time of unprecedented changes.

1. Enhance emergency preparedness and response.
2. Incorporate climate change and its impacts into planning and decision-making processes.
3. Restore and protect natural systems and natural resources.

4. Develop and improve water supply and management.
5. Build institutional capacity and knowledge to address impacts associated with climate change.
6. More effectively manage and share best available data.
7. Educate, inform and engage landowners, public officials, citizens and others.

Read the overview of the interim report from the PAWGs at:  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0801003.pdf](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0801003.pdf)

### **Citizen Engagement and Action Framework**

Three climate education and citizen engagement summits were held in western and eastern Washington. More than 70 leaders in climate change education – representing energy utilities, business, formal education, non-profits, tribes, and government – created recommendations for how to help citizens reduce and prepare for the impacts of climate change, and to participate in the new green economy.

Read the overview of the Citizen Engagement and Action Framework at: [www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0801005.pdf](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0801005.pdf)

### **Next Steps**

The interim report provides a strong foundation, but the process doesn't end here. The report identifies several next steps to help Washington achieve all the goals identified in the Governor's Executive Order. These include:

- Continuing the work of the Climate Advisory Team.
- Continuing to work with other states and provinces in regional efforts.
- Coordinating efforts with local governments.
- Engaging more citizens.
- Continuing to implement existing policies and introducing new legislation as needed.
- Reducing the carbon footprint of state agencies.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Read the entire interim report at  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/interimreport.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/interimreport.htm)

### **CONTACTS**

#### **Department of Ecology**

Janice Adair  
Special Assistant to the Director  
(360) 407-0291  
[jada461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:jada461@ecy.wa.gov)

Hedia Adelsman  
Executive Policy Analyst  
(360) 407-6222  
[hade461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:hade461@ecy.wa.gov)

#### **Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development**

Tony Usibelli  
Assistant Director  
(360) 725-3110

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