



Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup Background Information December 2013

The purpose of this handout is to bring you information on the Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup and the State's efforts to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

What are greenhouse gases?

Greenhouse gases are gases in the atmosphere that trap heat from the sun and warm the planet's surface. The primary greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons (gases used for refrigeration and air conditioning). The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports that greenhouse gases have increased by approximately 25 percent since 1750, which was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas, and wood) has contributed to this increase in greenhouse gases.

In Washington State, the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions is transportation, accounting for 44 percent of the total emissions in 2010. The next largest sources are fossil fuel combustion in the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors, and the electricity sector.

What is Washington doing about greenhouse gas emissions?

In 2008, the Washington State Legislature adopted greenhouse gas reduction targets requiring the State to limit greenhouse gases to achieve the following emissions reductions ([RCW 70.235.020](#)):

- By 2020, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the State to 1990 levels;
- By 2035, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the State to 25% below 1990 levels;
- By 2050, the State will do its part to reach global climate stabilization levels by reducing overall emissions to 50% below 1990 levels, or 70% below the State's expected emissions that year.

While the Legislature has adopted a number of policies that are helping Washington reduce greenhouse gas emissions, more work needs to be done for the State to reach its emission reduction targets and put the State on a path to a low-carbon future.

What is the Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup?

In 2013, the Legislature created the Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup ([Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5802](#)). Workgroup members include Governor Jay Inslee, Senator Doug Ericksen (42nd District), Senator Kevin Ranker (40th District), Representative Joe Fitzgibbon (34th District), and Representative Shelly Short (7th District).

The purpose of the Workgroup is to recommend a State program of actions and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, that if implemented would ensure achievement of the State's emissions targets set in [RCW 70.235.020](#). The Workgroup report is due to the State Legislature by December 31, 2013.

The Workgroup's effort will be informed by an evaluation of approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The evaluation will: 1) analyze Washington State's emissions and related energy consumption, as well as current greenhouse gas reduction policies adopted by the State; 2) examine the contribution of federal policies to the State's emission reductions; and 3) evaluate programs adopted in

other States and countries. The evaluation will be completed by October 15, 2013. The report, along with various products, can be access on the Governor’s website (link provided below).

How will the community be involved?

Public hearings will be held:

Date	Time	Location	Basic Topics
Wednesday, October 16 th	5:00-8:20 pm	Spokane: Music Auditorium on the Spokane Falls Community College C campus (Bldg. 15, Room 110), 3410 West Ft George Wright Drive	Public Hearing
Wednesday, October 23 rd	6:00-9:20 pm	Seattle: Bell Harbor International Conference Center, 2211 Alaskan Way	Public Hearing
Friday, December 13 th	2:00-5:00 pm	Olympia: House Hearing Room A, State Capitol Campus	Public Hearing on the Workgroup’s draft proposals

The Workgroup is seeking the public’s comments verbally or written via comment sheets, which will be provided at the public hearings. Comments can also be provided via email after the meeting at: climateworkgroup@ecy.wa.gov. Written comments will be accepted until **October 30, 2013** on actions and policies the public would like the Workgroup to consider and until **5:00 p.m. on December 16, 2013** on the Workgroup’s draft proposals.

How will public comments and input be considered and incorporated?

The Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup is seeking comments on:

- The Workgroup process;
- Potential policies and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Washington State; and
- Policies and actions that the public does not want to see implemented in Washington State.

What is the schedule for the Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup’s decision-making process?

The Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup has met monthly, excluding August, since May 15, 2013. Recent and upcoming meetings and topics for discussion include:

Date	Time	Location	Basic Topics
Wednesday, November 6 th	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Olympia, Senate Hearing Room 3	Draft list of recommendations to serve as basis for Final Report
Friday, December 6 st	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Olympia, House Hearing Room A	Prioritize list of recommended policies and actions
Wednesday, December 18 th	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Olympia, Senate Hearing Room 4	Finalize proposed policies and actions as well as timeline and funding

Where can I find more information?

To learn more about the Workgroup or sign up for updates, please go to the Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup webpage at: <http://governor.wa.gov/issues/economy/climateWorkgroup/>.