REAL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Next steps for the **Climate Commitment Act** in WA

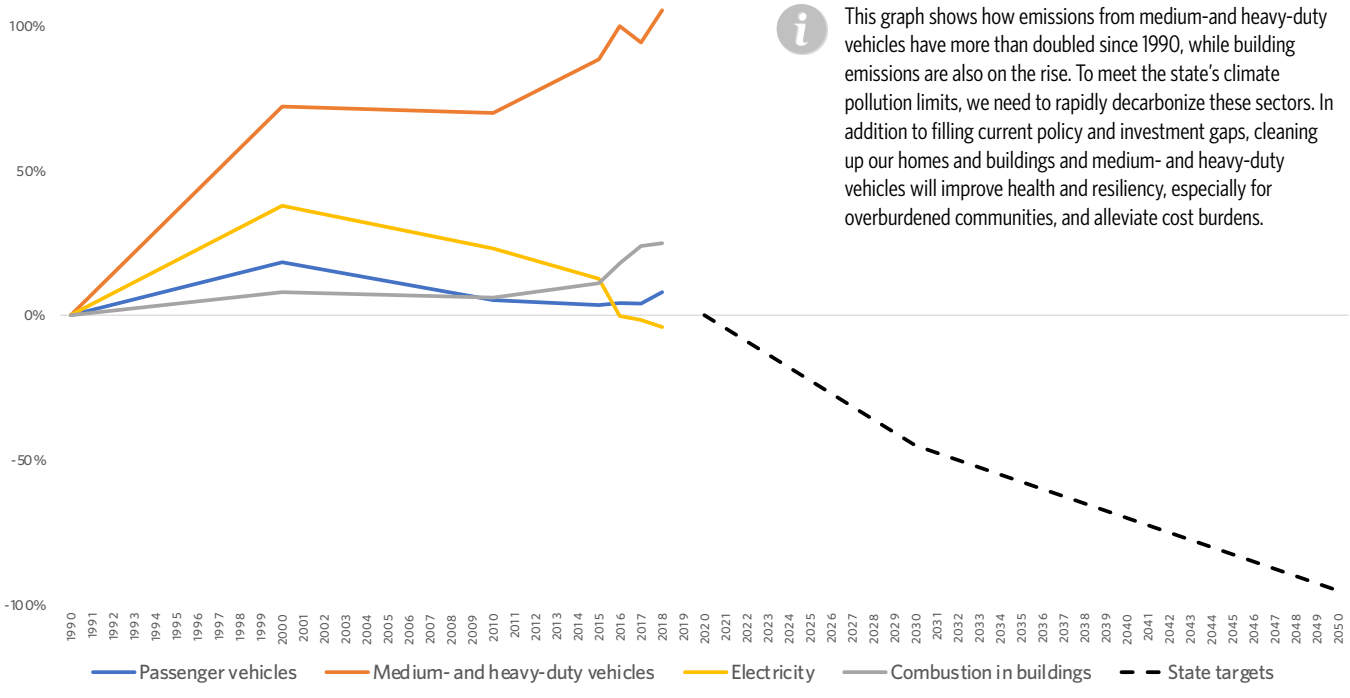
It is critical that we maintain the integrity of the Climate Commitment Act and invest in rapidly transitioning to a clean economy.

The Climate Commitment Act (CCA) is a transformational law that exemplifies Washington's climate leadership and is foundational to meeting our climate goals. The CCA caps Washington's emissions to ensure we achieve our climate pollution limits while creating vital revenue streams that must be spent to decrease air pollution and invest in climate solutions across the state, especially in overburdened communities that have suffered most from environmental disparities and climate change.

The CCA is likely to generate over $1 billion annually for climate initiatives.

CCA dollars must be spent strategically on climate and clean energy investments to ensure we rapidly reduce emissions and meet our climate goals. We need to invest this funding in projects and programs that substantially cut climate and air pollution to meet the scale of the challenge and reduce cost burden, especially on overburdened communities. The Environmental Justice Council is developing important reinvestment recommendations for the legislature to consider, that need to be prioritized and incorporated into a spending plan.

Emissions from homes and buildings and medium- and heavy-duty vehicles are on the rise. These are two key priority areas where we need to invest to meet climate goals.



This graph shows how emissions from medium-and heavy-duty vehicles have more than doubled since 1990, while building emissions are also on the rise. To meet the state's climate pollution limits, we need to rapidly decarbonize these sectors. In addition to filling current policy and investment gaps, cleaning up our homes and buildings and medium- and heavy-duty vehicles will improve health and resiliency, especially for overburdened communities, and alleviate cost burdens.

Zero Emission Medium- & Heavy-Duty Vehicles

The transportation sector is responsible for the largest share of Washington's climate pollution–almost 45%–and medium- and heavy-duty (MHD) vehicles, such as school and transit buses, garbage trucks, delivery vans, and semis, have a disproportionate pollution impact due to using diesel and their high mileage. Today, zero emission MHD vehicles account for less than 1% of sales; according to the State Energy Strategy, they need to account for at least two-thirds of sales by 2035 in order for Washington to meet its climate pollution limits.

On top of fueling the climate crisis, these vehicles currently spew toxic pollution. Diesel exhaust is responsible for 70% of the cancer risk from airborne pollutants in Washington.[1] This pollution results in health disparities in low-income and overburdened communities near roadways, ports, and distribution centers. Unfortunately, our policies and incentives regarding these vehicles are behind those for passenger vehicles and our planned spending is inadequate. Washington should fund:

A point-of-sale vehicle incentive program for zero emission MHD vehicles

Providing an incentive at the point of sale enables the greatest participation by owners of MHDs by mitigating their upfront costs. This type of program has been hugely successful in Massachusetts, California, New Jersey, and New York. This program should contain funding that prioritizes small businesses and helps switch highly polluting sectors, like port drayage.

Innovative demonstration projects of clean MHD vehicles

Washington should lead the way by supporting deployment of earlier-stage zero emission vehicle applications, such as clean fire trucks.

Incentives for MHD vehicle chargers

To transition our vehicles, we need a charging network that is capable of fueling larger vehicles. In addition, fleet operators often need financial and technical assistance for charging installation.

1. Washington Department of Ecology. https://ecology.wa.gov/Air-Climate/Climate-change/Reducing-greenhouse-gases/Diesel-emissions/Health-impacts.

Clean Homes & Buildings

Climate pollution from buildings is growing at a faster rate than any other sector. To achieve our climate goals, we must use our clean grid to electrify our buildings. Existing buildings produce the vast majority of carbon emissions and using fossil gas for heating produces toxic indoor air pollution. Just living in a home with gas cooking increases a child's risk of developing asthma by 42%.[2] It is critical we provide incentives to retrofit and electrify our homes and buildings. The following programs should be funding priorities:

Heat pump program targeting low-income households, affordable housing, and small businesses

Heat pumps provide both heating and cooling. Given the increasing number of heat waves, providing access to this technology is good for the climate and is a resiliency and health imperative. In our transition to clean homes and buildings, we must first prioritize low-income households, affordable housing, and small businesses that would not otherwise have the resources to electrify.

School electrification grants

Children should not be exposed to indoor air pollution while learning, but using gas to heat school buildings pollutes the air they're breathing. Furthermore, many schools do not have air conditioning, causing school closures during high temperatures. The legislature should provide schools with funding to upgrade HVAC systems and transition to clean electricity for their heating needs, with a focus on providing funding for schools in overburdened communities first.

Heat pump rebates for all

A broad incentive available to all customers would help tip decision-making when people are updating their heating systems, encouraging more households and businesses to transition off of fossil fuels as they purchase new appliances.

2. Lin, Brunekreef, and Gehring. "Meta-analysis of the effects of indoor nitrogen dioxide and gas cooking on asthma and wheeze in children." International Journal of Epidemiology, December 2013. https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/42/6/1724/737113?login=false.

Contact:

Kelly Hall
WA Director, Climate Solutions
kelly.hall@climatesolutions.org

Leah Missik
WA Transportation Policy Manager, Climate Solutions
leah.missik@climatesolutions.org