



King County

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Office of the Governor

February 14, 2008

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

I am writing to commend you and your staff for convening the Washington State Climate Advisory Team and embracing its final recommendations. As you know, climate change is the defining issue of our time. It affects our economy, health and natural resources, and poses challenges for us as we strive for equity and social justice. While recognizing that much hard work remains, including providing much-needed resources to implement these recommendations, I am pleased that this team is already moving Washington and our nation forward in addressing these challenges and capturing related opportunities. As a result of your vision and commitment on this issue, states like ours have taken a leadership role even while the federal government has been unwilling to act. Thank you for allowing King County a seat at the table.

As you know, our King County Executive Action Group on Climate Change is focused on developing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, which remains our region's single biggest source of global warming pollution. Because significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are needed to stabilize global climate – on the order of 60 to 80 percent by the year 2050 – the continuing growth of emissions from transportation will undoubtedly put more pressure on other sectors such as refining, manufacturing and electricity to reduce their emissions. Furthermore, it is clear from conclusions drawn by leading national analysis, such as the Urban Land Institute's *Growing Cooler* report, that we cannot expect clean vehicle technology and fuels alone to make a dent in our growing emissions.

As a regional transit agency, therefore, King County is working specifically to develop ways to reduce the "vehicle miles traveled" (VMT) of single-occupancy passenger vehicles (e.g., cars and light trucks), which are responsible for more than three-fifths of transportation sector CO₂ emissions. Guided by this analysis, King County as our region's transit agency is trying on a daily basis to meet the challenge of moving people out of their cars and into cleaner transportation alternatives. As you might have seen in the February 24th *Seattle Times* article on growing public transit ridership, the realities of population growth and economic development make this work all the more worthy of resources for expanded public transit.



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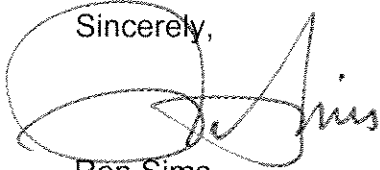
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I am pleased to see these ideas captured in the recommendations of the Climate Advisory Team's Transportation Working Group. As is reflected in the recommendations, it is clear that managing VMT is a crucial part of our regional solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and that such strategies should complement efforts to reduce emissions through clean vehicle technology and fuels investments and policies. As the Transportation Working Group indicated, we will only be able to reduce VMT effectively if we focus on providing alternatives for individuals to driving alone, developing plans which encourage non-motorized travel, and creating systems that charge the full cost of using our roadways.

In support of your efforts, I would like to encourage your staff and others in the State to continue to work with our King County team on these issues. Based on our collaboration, I am hopeful that we can make real progress in meeting the challenge of climate change in Washington and the United States.

The next task we face will be to turn these policy recommendations into actions on the ground. I look forward to partnering with you on implementation, and to making King County staff and technical resources available as we translate the work of the Climate Advisory Team into timetables, resource decisions and practical steps forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Sims", written over a large, light-colored circular stamp or watermark.

Ron Sims
King County Executive