

## Gov. Gregoire directs state to take strong actions on climate change

Gov. Chris Gregoire has ordered state actions to:

- Reduce climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Increase transportation and fuel-conservation options for Washington residents.
- Protect our state's water supplies and coastal areas.

Here are questions and answers about the Governor's Executive Order on Climate Change.

### **Q: If this order accomplishes all the things the Governor's climate change bill would have done, why was a bill needed?**

**A:** The Governor would have preferred to pass her bill. That would have created legal requirements to reduce emissions from coal and develop plans to ease traffic in urban areas. It would have also made it clear to the other Washington that states are demanding action on climate change now. It would have shown that not only is the Governor committed to action, but the state Legislature backs her up.

The message the Governor's Executive Order sends is that we cannot let politics delay action on climate change. Not here, and not in Washington, D.C.

### **Q: Given the actions on climate change taken by President Obama, and the cap-and-trade bill in Congress, why should the state spend scarce resources on these efforts?**

**A:** The best way for Washington to ensure fair treatment in a national program is to design one that works for us - one that accommodates our unique electricity-generating portfolio, our forest industries, and other important resources. We also want to help ensure the program creates good family-wage green jobs, and protects our important manufacturing base.

### WHY IT MATTERS

The impacts of climate change go far beyond a change in the weather. Climate shapes everything — ecosystems, crops, water, economy, lifestyles, health — so even small changes can have big impacts. A few degrees in temperature can make the difference between rain and snow, early snowmelt or late, flowing summer streams or dry creek beds.

Our state is vulnerable to a warming climate, especially our snow-fed water supplies and nearly 40 communities along our 2,300 miles of shoreline that are threatened by rising sea levels.

Washington State isn't waiting to see what happens with climate change. We're helping lead the way. We're reducing emissions, preparing for impacts, and growing a clean energy economy. We're working now to create a cleaner, more sustainable Washington.

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**Q: Isn't a federal solution the right solution? Does state action even make sense?**

**A:** When it comes to cap-and-trade, yes – a federal solution is the right solution, and we will be sure that solution works for Washington through our work on the regional cap-and-trade program. There are many other programs that states, tribes and local governments can and should use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – programs around energy efficient building codes and land use and development. We want a federal cap-and-trade program that is supported by smart, efficient state, local and tribal programs that complement the federal program.

**Q: Doesn't this order send the message to business that Washington regulations may end up being tougher than elsewhere, and lead to disinvestment in our economy?**

**A:** No. This sends the message that Washington is open for business – that Washington welcomes entrepreneurs and companies that will innovate and help build a green economy. We saw last year how energy costs suddenly helped bring this country to its knees. In the past, we've enjoyed cheap energy. But it's time to reboot. And we have the innovators and risk takers to lead us.

Just look what we have done in the past four years – our Department of Employment Security says we already have 47,000 green-collar jobs. We're the fifth-largest producer of wind power. We're building solar-power components, and making break-throughs in bio-energy. We have leaders in green buildings, biofuels and developing a smart power grid. And the Governor is working with the Governors of Oregon and California to create a "green highway" from the Canadian border to Mexico, which will be the first of its kind in the nation. This "green highway" will accommodate fully electric, zero-emission vehicles and those powered by alternative fuels.

There's a broad consensus that the cost of inaction would greatly exceed the cost of action. Research shows that inaction will cost the state \$3.8 billion per year by the 2020s. That's about \$1,250 per household. (Source: Climate Leadership Initiative at the University of Oregon.)

**Q: If a federal program is coming, why go after TransAlta now, and threaten the Lewis County economy?**

**A:** We're not out to hurt TransAlta and Lewis County. Let's be clear – TransAlta agrees with this course of action. The company has a reasonable timeframe to work to significantly reduce its carbon dioxide emissions. We need those reductions, since the Centralia-area coal-fired power plant is a major CO2 source in Washington. As an incentive for TransAlta to pursue quicker reductions, we're going to advocate early action credits. Also, it could take a while to actually approve, develop and implement a federal program. The course we're taking ensures reductions. And any federal climate change program would still apply to the plant.

**Q: If the Legislature rejected the Governor's proposal to authorize a regional cap-and-trade program, why continue the Western Climate Initiative?**

**A:** The Western Climate Initiative is like our classroom. It's where we have learned and will continue to learn the ins and outs of cap-and-trade so we can take those lessons to Congress. We've done that already with some success and will continue to do so. One of the strengths of our country is in the diversity of our states. Washington is the number one producer of hydropower in the United States – we need to be sure that our voice is at the table when national policy is being developed. Participation in the WCI gets us that seat at the table.

**Q: With the President's announcement this week on fuel standards, why focus on low carbon fuels?**

**A:** There are three parts to addressing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation: cleaner cars, a more efficient transportation system that reduces traffic, and cleaner fuels. The President's plan is a welcome and powerful action, but it only addresses cleaner cars. Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Washington, and the Governor's Executive Order promotes an improved transportation system as well as cleaner motor fuels to complement the federal action.

**Q: The low carbon fuel standard has been very controversial in California, and it would add costs for drivers. If we're not leaving this to the federal government, shouldn't we wait to see how this turns out in California before taking it on here?**

**A:** Based on work done by California and in New England states, low carbon fuel standards don't appear likely to raise fuel costs. Even so, the Governor's Executive Order clearly directs Ecology to study California and others who have developed or are developing such standards to find out what works, what doesn't and what type of program to reduce greenhouse gases from transportation fuels would make sense for motorists, businesses and the environment here in Washington.

**Q: The Governor testified this morning in favor of EPA taking administrative action on greenhouse gases, and her order sends a signal that she's willing to do the same. But she has said she supports a federal cap-and-trade program. Which is it?**

**A:** Two things are absolutely essential: that we put in place an effective program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and that we do it as soon as possible. The best way to do that is through a strong federal program – no question. Now that we have a President who is willing to lead, that has become possible. But let's be realistic – it will take a variety of tools to make this work. And until the federal program is in place, we can't be certain that it will be as strong or as soon as we need it. States also may need to supplement that program, or even take action sooner if the federal debate bogs down. So now is not the time to ease up, stick our heads in the sand and say "this is someone else's problem." Action follows leadership, and until we see action, we must continue to provide that leadership.

**Q: The Governor says that leadership on climate change and sending a clear message to Washington, D.C., are critical. But isn't the message coming from Washington State that even here, there isn't unanimous support for a cap-and-trade program?**

**A:** When the Governor began putting her bill together, George Bush was president, and we didn't know who the next president would be. Asking for authority to create a regional cap-and-trade program – in the absence of federal leadership – made sense, because we needed fast action. But our new president is pressing for strong federal action now. So saying “no” to a regional system does not mean Washington is saying “no” to a federal system. To the contrary, we believe it indicates a preference for a federal cap-and-trade system, which also is our goal.

**Q: The Governor just signed SB 5560, which directs the state to develop a plan to respond to the impacts from climate change. Yet her Executive Order directs agencies to do the same thing for sea level rise and water supply. Why those two, and isn't it redundant and unnecessary?**

**A:** They are complementary, not redundant. SB 5560 is more general and directs Ecology, working with other agencies, to compile an initial climate change response strategy. The Executive Order specifically calls out the two most critical issues for our state to respond to: sea level rise and water availability. The Governor wants to be sure these two issues receive focused attention as we work to develop our plan for how to deal with the level of climate change that our current levels of greenhouse gas emissions have already committed us to.

**Q: This directs the Department of Transportation (DOT) to work with local planners to reduce the number of miles people can travel. Is it fair to punish people for driving? What about people who have no other option?**

**A:** This has nothing to do with punishing people or telling them they can't drive. It's about providing choices so people have better options than sitting in traffic. Transportation emissions are our largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Unless we are smarter about moving people around, as our region grows, that problem will get worse, not better. Low- and no-emission vehicles will help in the long run, but there is no avoiding the fact that we have to bring down the average number of miles driven per driver in our largest cities. The Governor is telling DOT to work with local planners to develop those better options.

**Q: What kind of reaction are you hearing from the Legislature? The business community? Environmental community?**

**A:** We have not yet shared the specifics, so we'll see. But there was support for the Governor's climate bill from the environmental community, from several sectors of the business community, from faith groups and from labor. As for the Legislature, we know the votes were there in the Senate, and the bill passed the House. So while there are some new elements here, the Governor is confident that there will be broad support for taking this action. But the politics are tough, and we expect there will be detractors.