

## Make Polluters Pay: Pass the Carbon Pollution Accountability Act

In Washington, the impacts of climate change have already begun to intensify devastating wildfires and other environmental hazards and threaten both our industries and the health of our residents. While climate change is a global issue, we must act locally to protect the communities in Washington most vulnerable to its impacts by holding polluters responsible for the damage they cause. Pricing carbon will grow the state's green economy, clean up our air, and generate revenue to invest in the communities hit hardest by both climate disruption and pollution. The Carbon Pollution Accountability Act (CPAA) achieves these goals.

**How it works:** The CPAA implements statutory limits on pollution that the state legislature enacted in 2008 but never enforced. This policy auctions “allowances” or pollution permits to major emitters, who then must reduce their emissions to comply with pollution limits. Each year, the state will decrease the number of available permits, prompting polluters to emit less. The purchase of allowances generates **\$1 billion annually** in state revenue to fund services we depend on and projects that further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Why we like it:** As an increasing number of jurisdictions put a price on carbon around the world, Washington has the opportunity to create an effective model for **the most comprehensive, equitable, and transparent carbon price**. This policy is unique because it:

- Covers an unprecedented **85% of state greenhouse gas emissions**, creating widespread accountability across sectors and improving air quality for as many Washingtonians as possible;
- Auctions **100% of allowances** to generate billions of dollars in revenue for the state;
- Rebates **\$108 million annually to working families** with lower-incomes through the Working Families Tax Rebate, shifting some of the tax burden from low-income families to our state's biggest polluters;
- Invests in affordable housing, transit-oriented development, transit pass discounts, and other projects that **simultaneously reduce carbon and help all communities thrive**;
- Creates a **civilian oversight mechanism**, engaging key stakeholders like labor, communities of color, and communities with lower incomes to ensure the program benefits all Washingtonians;
- Commissions an **Environmental Justice “Hotspot” Study** to identify adversely affected communities across the state and guide revenue reinvestment efforts;
- Keeps jobs in Washington through the **Carbon Pollution Competiveness tax credit**;
- **Strictly limits offsets** and closes other loopholes, employs important cost-containment and anti-manipulation measures, and assesses strict penalties on entities that fail to comply; and
- Could be linked to similar programs in other jurisdictions, broadening the carbon market and **spurring strong, equitable action on climate change**.

**Why Washington:** The Evergreen State is already a national leader in renewable energy. The CPAA is an opportunity to encourage even more investment in green technologies and infrastructure, putting our state ahead of the curve as the low-carbon economy grows worldwide. Washington's climate change legislation puts highly impacted communities—like immigrants and refugees—first, giving them the tools they need to adapt to climate disruption, improving their air quality, and creating opportunities for economic empowerment.

*For more information, please contact:*

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