



Washington's Transition to Clean Energy

December 17, 2014

Remarks as prepared

Thank you, Jeff, and thanks to the mayor and all the speakers here today who support reducing carbon pollution and a path toward a clean energy future for the state of Washington.

I also want to thank some very special guests for coming. I met Jasmyine and Alderbaran Hernandez Pasten when I toured their South Park neighborhood.

What they told me was that Jasmyine was 12 years old before she realized that unlike her, not every kid goes to the hospital to get treated for asthma. And they showed me maps that illustrate how asthma and other health impacts are concentrated where carbon pollution is the greatest.

None of us should be willing to accept this, which is why we're here today to do the right thing for our kids and grandkids.

We're here today to announce a plan to take action on climate. It's the smart thing to do, because we can make the air cleaner for our children, our businesses can lead the world in clean technology, and doing so will bring good-paying jobs to Washington.

And with so many of us committed to working together on this, I believe we can make real progress toward that future.

Everyone here agrees with that. We may not all agree on what to do first, and I'm open to all ideas that will make genuine progress.

But across our state, everyone knows it's time to act.

They know it in Yakima, where farmers are experiencing the challenges of reduced water supplies, and we're investing billions to secure the water future not just for those farmers, but for the salmon and the tribes who also rely on it.



They know it in Anacortes, in Chehalis, and here in King County, where local leaders are already taking action to mitigate and adapt to rising sea levels and increased flood levels.

They know it in the board rooms of our clean energy companies like UniEnergy and MacDonald Miller.

The Legislature knew it in 2008 when it adopted sensible limits on carbon to reduce pollution over time.

But they never identified a way to meet those limits. It is past time to enforce the laws we have to reduce carbon pollution in the state of Washington.

If we don't act, we're not going to meet our 2020 limit. We aren't going to meet our 2035 limit. And we're going to fall very, very short of our 2050 limit.

Today I'm announcing my climate action plan, which includes a suite of strategies to make significant progress to reduce carbon pollution in Washington.

At the center of my plan is the Carbon Pollution Accountability Act which establishes a market-based program that does four things:

First, it puts a firm limit on annual pollution levels, because it's critical to ensure we meet our limits.

Second, it reduces that limit over time, so we can make steady progress while companies adjust.

Third, it charges big polluters based on the amount of pollution they emit, because it's time polluters paid their fair share.

And fourth, it reinvests the proceeds in transportation, education and our communities.

My proposal also includes:

- Clean transportation, including cleaner cars, electric vehicle incentives and investments to move people and goods more efficiently.
- Clean fuels – I've asked the Department of Ecology to prepare a draft rule that outlines a clean fuel standard requiring a transition to cleaner fuels over time. Before we initiate formal rulemaking, I want to allow time for feedback from the legislative and public review. I also want to have a chance to see what proposals and progress are made as the session unfolds. If a decision to pursue rules is made at a later date, it would require the development of a formal proposed rule, and would trigger the beginning of an extensive public review process.
- A Clean Energy Fund to help research institutions, utilities and businesses develop and deploy new renewable energy solutions.
- Solar Incentives to spur the use of solar power for electricity in households and small businesses across Washington.
- Energy Efficiency, to build on Washington's strong legacy of getting more benefit from the energy we use.
- Coal Fired Electricity – I continue to encourage the state's electric utilities to define a plan for reducing and ultimately eliminating the use of electrical power produced by coal.

Here's why I think we can do this. History has shown that change comes faster and cheaper than we often anticipate.

The cost of solar electricity has dropped by an average of 20 percent per year since 2010; it is now equal to or less than the cost of electricity from other sources in at least 79 countries.

Similarly, the cost of wind energy has dropped 43 percent in the United States since 2009 – making it now cheaper than coal for new generating capacity. We have seen over \$7 billion of new investment in wind generation in our state alone since 2006 when voters passed Initiative 937.

We can build on our outstanding base of carbon-free hydropower, the tremendous investments our utilities have made in wind power in the last decade, and our sustained excellence in energy efficiency. I believe it's our destiny to lead in clean energy.

Washington may be less than one tenth of one percent of the world's population, but we're number one in the world in software, in aerospace, in apples, in online retailing.

That's why I'm glad to have labor, REI and Virginia Mason among the many leaders standing here today.

And while this is an enormous economic opportunity, it's about more than jobs.

It's also about fairness.

People with low to moderate incomes – a disproportionate share of whom are people of color – are the hardest hit by the impacts of climate change and are least equipped to adapt.

That's why I'm glad Diane Narasaki is here today, along with many others from the Latino Community, the African American Community and the Pacific Islander community. With their help and others, we'll make sure these communities participate in the clean energy future we're building.

To do this, a centerpiece of my policy is to fund the Working Families Tax Credit. This program provides financial assistance to help lift more than 400,000 working families out of poverty.

It's time to move forward. It's time to provide incentives for businesses and consumers, to enforce the legal limits on pollution, and to invest in our communities and our families.

There will be alarmist attacks directed toward this plan, and we should not be surprised by them.

Corporate polluters have launched aggressive campaigns against similar efforts in other states and have already begun to do the same here in Washington.

Their only hope is to make us believe we don't have any choice in the matter.

But we do have a choice.

We can choose cleaner air, more efficient cars, and a better transportation system.

We can choose energy independence.

I want to work with everyone here, and with the Legislature. Only failure is not an option.

We DO have a choice in our future. And today, let's make a choice to take action.
Thank you.