

Uphold WA's landmark Climate Commitment Act

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While leaders at COP28 strive to make climate progress globally, here in Washington, we must remain steadfast in our commitments to climate action and environmental justice to build the resilient future we want to see,... (Peter Dejong / The Associated Press) **More**

By [David Mendoza](#), [Gregg Small](#) and [Alyssa Macy](#)

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Fossil fuel companies are warming our planet with dangerous emissions, the impacts of which are all around us — wildfire and smoke, drought, extreme heat waves, coastal sea-level rise, and river flooding from winter storms — all most significantly impacting already vulnerable communities. Confronting this crisis demands urgent action locally and globally to reduce carbon emissions while prioritizing equity and environmental justice.

As leaders on climate, Washington state is forging a path toward a more resilient future — but this future depends on sustained climate action and upholding transformational laws like Washington’s Climate Commitment Act. Moving backward and letting oil companies off scot-free is not an option if we hope to see a future in which people and nature thrive.

World leaders, environmental organizations, and Indigenous and community representatives have gathered for Climate COP28 — the annual United Nations climate conference focused on climate solutions through emissions reduction and nature-based resilience for people and the environment. This gathering comes on the heels of the [Fifth National Climate Assessment](#) that indicates the U.S. is not on track to meet emissions-reduction goals to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Missing this goal would result in more frequent and severe climate-fueled natural disasters and humanitarian crises, costing billions and an unknown amount of lives every year.

Still, there is hope. While the assessment shows that the U.S. is not meeting its commitments, it also shows that every action to prevent the worst impacts of climate change is a cumulative benefit. We must act now — while prioritizing front-line communities whose lives and livelihoods are most threatened and who have contributed least to the problem: Indigenous communities, communities of color, and rural, natural resource-dependent communities.

Washington's landmark climate legislation — the Climate Commitment Act — is intended to address climate change at its source by requiring that polluters pay for and steadily reduce their carbon pollution — not to exceed a cap set by the state. Revenue generated by the CCA is then invested in climate resilience for tribal nations and front-line communities, the clean-energy transition, and healthy lands and waters. This work is Washington's contribution toward global climate goals and to our own well-being and resilience. Dollars raised from polluters through the cap-and-invest program go directly to action on the ground: community resilience and flood plain management, affordable clean energy to heat and cool homes, accessible electric vehicles and buses, and expanded air-quality monitoring to address environmental health disparities. Coupled with historic federal investments through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act — both of which will bring billions of dollars to Washington in the next decade — we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity.

There are efforts to undermine this essential climate action legislation, but doing so would hamper climate progress locally and globally. We cannot afford to reverse course or push “pause.”

The Climate Commitment Act and its investments deliver on the most crucial findings of the National Climate Assessment: to mitigate every 10th of a degree of warming by rapidly reducing our emissions and increasing community and ecosystem resilience. Washington must uphold this commitment. And when doing so, our investments and decision-making must involve front-line communities and honor treaty rights and the leadership of Indigenous peoples, and equitably resource communities to address climate change impacts at the local level.

While leaders at COP28 strive to make climate progress globally, here in Washington, we must remain steadfast in our commitments to climate action and environmental justice to build the resilient future we want to see. Our three organizations call on communities across Washington and state legislators to hold polluters accountable and to pay for the harm they cause by defending the Climate Commitment Act. Together, we can create a resilient and equitable future for generations to come.

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