



Washington State Activities to Reduce Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In Washington, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from the transportation sector account for nearly 50 percent of the state's total emissions. The proportion of transportation emissions is larger in Washington than in most other states due to the availability of clean energy sources such as hydropower, which offsets the emissions from other sources.

Reducing transportation emissions in Washington has been and will continue to be a priority. Washington's goal is to reduce emissions by providing people with better transportation options. Washington is already implementing many best practices to reduce transportation emissions.

GHG Reduction Strategies

Washington needs a full suite of strategies to reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions.

Washington has set both greenhouse gas and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction benchmarks. The primary ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector include

- Reducing vehicle miles traveled.
- Improving vehicle technology.
- Lowering the carbon content of fuels.
- Improving the efficiency of the transportation system.

Research shows that it will take all of these strategies to adequately reduce emissions.

Washington needs more sustainable funding to provide people with better transportation options.

Transportation funding is reliant on the gas tax. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled also reduces funding for transportation. Washington needs a more viable funding base, one that can help the state invest in and move toward a more sustainable transportation system. There may be opportunities through market mechanisms which could include cap and trade that could help the state invest in better transportation options.

Washington needs to manage greenhouse gas reductions at a system level not at a project level.

While Washington is one of only a few state departments of transportation that include information about greenhouse gas emissions in environmental impact statements and environmental assessments for transportation projects, greenhouse gas emissions are best addressed at the corridor, sub-area, city/county, and regional scales. There is a growing expectation from the public for "self-mitigating projects," but single project improvements cannot be the total solution.

State Legislation and Executive Order

This past legislative session, Washington State passed two primary bills and Governor Gregoire issued an Executive Order that will help reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions.

The Executive Order directs a consortium of state agencies to work with the Governor's Office to

- Explore establishing a Low Carbon Fuel Standard in Washington.
- Seek funding to establish a West Coast "electric corridor" along I-5.
- Provide citizens with better transportation options.
- Continue working with the Western Climate Initiative and prepare to participate in a federal cap-and-trade system when adopted.
- Estimate current and future statewide vehicle miles traveled.
- Evaluate potential changes to the vehicle miles traveled benchmarks to address low- or no-emission vehicles.
- Develop additional strategies to reduce emissions from the transportation sector.

Recent Legislation

SSHB 1481 Electric Vehicles

- Directs the state and the Puget Sound Regional Council to seek federal or private funding for electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Directs the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to establish an alternative fuels corridor pilot project along I-5.
- Directs the state to install charging outlets for electric vehicles in areas such as safety rest stops and state parking and maintenance facilities.
- Provides tax incentives for electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Directs state agencies and local governments, to the extent practicable by June 2013, to achieve 40 percent fuel usage using electricity or biofuel for publicly owned vessels, vehicles, and construction equipment.

ESSSB 5560 State Agency Climate Leadership

Requires state agencies to

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its buildings, vehicles, and operations.
- Reduce fuel consumption and emissions from all classes of vehicles.
- Beginning in 2010, consider when distributing capital funds whether the entity receiving the funds has adopted policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Develop a response strategy to climate change impacts.

Current Activities

National efforts

- Washington State Transportation Secretary, Paula Hammond, chairs the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Climate Change Steering Committee.
- Washington State was selected through a competitive process to participate in a National Academy of Sciences Transportation Research Board, AASHTO, and Center for Clean Air Policy executive workshop on climate change and transportation in September 2009.
- Several WSDOT staff are advisors on National Academy of Sciences Transportation Research Board projects.

Regional efforts

- WSDOT is developing and implementing an alternative fuels pilot project along the I-5 corridor in cooperation with California and Oregon.
- Our region has prioritized high speed rail including Sound Transit's commuter rail and the Cascade high speed corridor. WSDOT is currently seeking grants from ARRA high-speed passenger rail stimulus funds.
- Governor Gregoire recently led the effort to present a bi-partisan consensus position on climate change legislation signed by 30 Governors.

Statewide efforts

- Washington has set state-wide greenhouse gas and vehicle miles traveled reduction benchmarks in law.
- Washington State completed a Climate Action Plan in December 2008 that includes strategies to reduce emissions from transportation (http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/2008CATdocs/IWG/tran/110508_transportation_iwg_final_report.pdf)
- WSDOT's strategic plan for Moving Washington includes three key principles: managing demand, operating efficiently and adding capacity strategically—these principles support greenhouse gas reduction strategies.
- WSDOT is one of a handful of state departments of transportation that has a climate change program and dedicated staff focusing on climate change and transportation.
- WSDOT was the only state department of transportation that joined The Climate Registry as a founding member, and is now one of only two state departments of transportation currently participating in the registry.
- In addition, WSDOT may be the only state department of transportation that has completed a comprehensive agency Emissions Inventory.
- The Washington State Department of Ecology is currently developing rules for the state mandatory greenhouse gas reporting requirement. Businesses, state agencies, industrial operations, rental car companies, local government and others will fall under the reporting requirements. WSDOT will need to report vehicle and ferry fleet greenhouse gasses emitted in 2009 and 2010, and will need to report all agency emissions in 2011.

Project level efforts

- WSDOT's projects consider multi-modal features and programs (e.g., Commute Trip Reduction, demand management, pricing).
- WSDOT received a national award from the National Association of Environmental Professionals for our plans for the treatment of greenhouse gas emissions in the I-5 bi-state Columbia River Crossing project.

Planning efforts

Transportation planning as a way to address climate change is a focus in Washington State.

- For almost two decades, development has been guided by the state's Growth Management Act, in which Senator Cantwell played a significant role.
- In December 2008, the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development completed a report entitled: *Planning for Climate Change: Addressing Climate Change through Comprehensive Planning under the Growth Management Act*. The report describes current actions being taken by local government, recommends amendments to the Growth Management Act or other statutes, describes greenhouse gas assessment tools that could help local governments, and resources needed to put the recommendations into practice.
- The Governor's Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act of 2006 increased planning coordination among local, regional and state levels for transportation and land use planning and development. As a result of this act, 56 local governments and five regions in the state have established plans to reduce VMT per employee at Commute Trip Reduction worksites by 13 percent by 2011. If this goal is achieved this will result in a reduction of 26,500 vehicle trips and 175 million vehicle miles traveled to Commute Trip Reduction worksites each year by 2011.

WSDOT programs

WSDOT is a national leader in managing demand and has many programs already in place that reduce GHG and VMT, including:

- **Commute Trip Reduction Program.** As a result of this program, in 2007 employees drove 170 million miles less and consumed 8 million less gallons of fuel. This resulted in a savings of \$23 million.
- **Rideshare Program.** Washington has the largest public vanpool program in the country including 2,780 vans with more than 23,000 riders. Washington has 357 park and ride lots and 54,000 parking spaces around the state.
- **Construction Traffic Management Program.** Construction closures provide an opportunity to encourage the public to try travel alternatives such as carpools, transit, vanpools, walking, etc. for their daily commute.
- **Regional Mobility Grant Program.** This program provides funding to local governments for projects that improve system connections and efficiency, which makes transportation alternatives more viable and appealing. Vehicle miles traveled reduction is one of the selection criteria for the grants.
- **Kitsap County Telework Pilot Project** developed a toolkit for employers to increase telework in Kitsap County. A report on the initial program results will be available in July 2009.
- **Other programs include** Safe Routes to Schools Program, High Occupancy Vehicle and High Occupancy Tolling Program, Variable Tolling and Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.