

February 4, 2018

To: Senator Kevin Van de Wege  
Representative Steve Tharinger  
Representative Mike Chapman  
Washington State Legislature

Re: State carbon pricing



Dear State Legislative representatives from District 24:

Olympic Climate Action maintains a membership of more than 700 members from the Olympic Peninsula through email and other social media. Our membership promotes action by government at all levels to both mitigate climate change and prepare adaptation measures.

At today's monthly membership meeting, we unanimously agreed to send this letter urging legislative action on a strong state carbon tax. We believe the single most urgent need for our society is to put a price on carbon that reflects its true costs and provides a disincentive for its use. We have been happy to see several carbon tax bills under consideration by the state legislature, one of which has passed out of Senate committee (SB6203).

However, in considering such legislation, we believe the following concepts to be essential:

- **Get the target right:** Scientists such as James Hansen, former NASA lead climate scientist, tell us that to set a target that doesn't risk the safety and well-being of the next generation, we need to aim for 350 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere by the end of the century. Our state's contribution to reaching that target is a 10% reduction from 1990 greenhouse gas emissions levels by 2020, 68% by 2035 and 91% by 2050. The steepness of the curve matters as much as the final target. Our carbon pricing needs to aim for that curve.
- **Get the price right:** To meet the above target, we advocate a meaningful initial carbon pricing point of \$25/ton with a 10-15% annual escalator, either mandated or else based on performance in meeting state carbon goals. This is the consensus of economists working on the issue.
- **Support active mitigation:** Use some of the proceeds to actively support the reduction of our carbon footprint through incentives, research, and infrastructure investment. Explore the creation of a market for forest carbon sequestration.
- **Ensure equity:** Assure that those least able to deal with additional expenses in their budgets find relief; that poor communities least able to deal with cope with climate impacts are helped to achieve resiliency; and that workers in dislocated economic sectors are helped to find alternate employment.
- **Ensure integrity:** Construct the program in such a way that it does not lead to "leakage" of greenhouse-gas emissions to other states or countries.

***Our mission:** We seek a safe, prosperous, sustainable future for residents of the Olympic Peninsula by addressing the threat of climate change. [www.olyclimate.org](http://www.olyclimate.org)*



- **Ensure accountability and oversight:** Ensure taxpayers' funds are spent both effectively and efficiently with broad benefits, including implementing the State's Clean Air Rule.

Regarding the watered-down version of SB6203 that passed out of Senate committee, we have heard statements from some along the lines of not worrying about the targets, the pricing, or the science because it's more important to do something rather than nothing. We believe such thinking is misguided for an issue of this urgency, where we can't afford to get it wrong: half a loaf might be worse than none if it leads us to think we've solved the problem and thus to become complacent.

If a bill passed by the state legislature doesn't adequately protect our common future, the people of this state will have to take that responsibility upon ourselves in the form of an initiative to the people. But we prefer that you get the job done now, passing ambitious legislation that truly sets a path forward for our children and vulnerable communities. In this spirit, let us move quickly to "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

Sincerely,

Ed Chadd, Executive Committee member,

on behalf of Olympic Climate Action