

June 2024

To: Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Executive Committee, Lacey City Council, Olympia City Council, Tumwater City Council, and Thurston Board of County Commissioners

From: Community Advisory Workgroup Members, Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (Collaborative)

We, the undersigned, call on the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Executive Committee and local elected bodies to take bolder policy action and to identify, secure, and invest more staff and financial resources toward implementing the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP).

The Collaborative and its member jurisdictions have taken important steps toward implementing the TCMP, including hiring staff and committing funds to a variety of initiatives. However, at the Collaborative retreat in April, it was revealed to us that the County and Cities are not on track to achieve the vital goals laid out in the TCMP- 45% greenhouse gas reduction by 2030 and 85% reduction by 2050. We are still over 40% away from our 2030 goal. This means we need to reduce emissions by an average of 7% per year to meet the goal.

Resources within the Collaborative must see significant growth. This requires the search for additional local, state, and federal funds. The Executive Committee should champion a dedicated local funding source, while actively lobbying state and federal officials to more robustly fund these efforts. We are not asking you to redirect the work of the existing staff, we are asking for more staff and resources.

This is an opportunity to bring together all local governments to transform our communities. Unfortunately, we still see local government policy decisions being made that are contrary to the TCMP goals. Additional coordination is needed across the Collaborative's jurisdictions, and within each jurisdiction, to achieve the needed reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

We desperately need to be more visionary in our policymaking. The Collaborative needs additional staff to create more durable partnerships with other municipalities within and beyond Thurston County. We can create a grassroots lobbying block out of Washington's communities to demand the federal and state funds we need to achieve our climate targets. We must not limit our public imaginations or ambitions.

In recent years Washington state has seen increased wildfire activity, extreme weather events, and droughts. Current global climate model projections only see these alarming trends increasing. Sea levels are rising, storms are raging, and temperatures are increasing. Climate Change is here. We can no longer afford half measures. As the old adage says, "The best time to act was yesterday, the second best time is today."

The people alive today will be remembered by future generations for what we did and did not do to address Climate Change. Let us be remembered for fighting Climate Change and securing for the children of tomorrow a world better than how we found it. Let us be remembered for winning the Earth back. The Community Advisory Workgroup members stand ready to support you in acting with courage and boldness to meet this critical moment in our history.

Signed:

Community Advisory Workgroup members:

Stephen Bernath
Tierra Bonds
Courtney Cecale
Tom Crawford
Amita Devarajan
Juan Estaban Haeckermann

Rachel Hastings
Matthew Landers
Mackenzie McCall
Shannon Sipher
Lauren Tamboer

Community Organizations:

Black Hills Audubon Society Conservation Committee
of Thurston County
Olympia Indivisible
South Sound Sierra Club

League of Women Voters

Restoring Earth Connection
Thurston Climate Action Team