March 15, 2023

To: Senator Christine Rolfes

cc: Senate Ways and Means Committee; 46rd LD Delegation

As we face down the worsening climate crisis it is essential that Climate Commitment Act (CCA) revenue is spent in ways that reduce Greenhouse gas pollution as quickly as possible. We are seeing the effects of climate change in Washington in the unprecedented wildfires, warming of oceans, declining salmon returns, and die-offs in forests due to hotter, drier summers and warmer winters. Scientists are now saying that we are in a climate crisis because we have delayed so long to take meaningful action to reduce Greenhouse gas pollution.

The CCA contains provisions for the revenue to be spent equitably to ensure that the transition to a clean economy addresses the needs of overburdened communities. The Legislature made substantial progress in passage of the CCA and Low Carbon Fuels Standard, however, Washington State remains 6.1 million metric tons CO2 equivalent short of meeting 2030's 50 million metric ton CO2 equivalent Greenhouse gas reduction target[1].

Unfortunately as seen in California and as described by policy experts Danny Cullenward and David Victor in the book *Making Climate Policy Work*, greenhouse gas reduction policy may be compromised when carbon tax revenue is used by legislators to fund marginal projects in their own constituencies and for their own priorities. We marvel at how legislators have to be informed on a broad spectrum of issues, but that does not give them time to become climate policy experts. We acknowledge that legislators must be responsive to their constituents, but resist being pressured into funding a constituent's proposal that doesn't rapidly reduce Greenhouse gas pollution. There need to be guidelines and criteria by which a legislator can judge a policy for effectiveness in addressing the goals of the CCA then the guidelines can be referenced for accepting or rejecting a proposal and not the legislator.

How is the Legislature planning to prevent questionable expenditures from happening as seen in California? Here are some suggestions for you to consider:

Since legislators are not climate policy experts, please utilize experts to draft specific guidelines on how the funds are to be expended. The University of Washington Climate Impacts Group may be such a resource for drafting guidance for natural systems, and Washington State University Energy Program may provide guidance for energy systems.

Proposed expenditures from CCA funds should be consistent with Washington Department of Commerce *2021 State Energy Strategy* report, which prioritized economy-wide electrification of buildings and transportation as the best path towards meeting the state's Greenhouse Gas mandates to de-carbonize the economy by 2050. Expenditures should be considered in how they work together with Federal legislation in the Inflation Reduction Act to bring about broad adoption by Washington homes and businesses, while acknowledging economic disparities.

Expenditures from the CCA should be quantified by climate policy experts for emissions reduction before the appropriations legislation is brought up for a floor vote.

CCA spending is a key element in achieving Washington's Greenhouse gas pollution reduction goals in an equitable way. Washingtonians deserve a transparent and accountable process for use of these funds. Thank you for considering these suggestions for providing the accountability we need and deserve.

Sincerely,

The 46th Legislative District Democrats

[1]See Washington Department of Ecology, Joel Creswell, Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee Work Session, December 2, 2022.

Submitted by:
Arvia Morris 46th
Jeff Berner 46th