

Washington State House of Representatives
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

Washington State Senate
P.O. Box 40403
Olympia, WA 98504

November 9, 2021

Dear Members of the Legislature,

The heat dome this past summer was a moment beyond denial for Washington state. The climate catastrophe is here, and for the most part we are unprepared.

Extreme heat is only one part of this disaster. Rising sea levels and flooding, severe storms, unprecedented droughts, and rampant wildfires are all happening across the U.S. and here in Washington. Scientists estimate that we now have fewer than 10 years to correct for what will otherwise be irreversible damage to habitable human conditions. Washington state now regularly spends billions of dollars each year fighting the impacts of climate catastrophe.

As local and county leaders and sovereign Tribal Nations in Washington, we see the impacts of this catastrophe up close. We see it in our constituents who died this past summer from heatstroke. We see it in farmers from rural communities whose crops are failing. And we see it in disaster response that is increasingly necessary due to flooding, fire, smoke, and more.

Our state has passed admirable climate legislation in recent years. However, **we must do more to confront the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions: transportation.**

Washington is beyond overdue for a statewide transportation package — but we don't need just any kind of investment. We need a transformative approach to transportation that dramatically prioritizes carbon reductions in line with the goals set out by Washington's own state agencies and local jurisdictions.

Our current approach to transportation is costing us. For some of us, it costs our lives: 117 people were struck and killed by cars while biking, rolling, or walking in Washington in 2020. Immigrants, Native Americans, low-income people, and people of color account for an outsize share of pedestrian deaths nationwide. Communities of color also have some of the longest commutes in Washington, and are most severely impacted by climate disaster.

For others, it costs our health. About 1 in 7 of us (900,000 people in Washington) live within a quarter mile of a heavy traffic road. Those of us who do breathe more diesel and gasoline exhaust, which exacerbates underlying health conditions like asthma or heart disease and is linked to adverse birth outcomes such as low birth weight and premature births.

There are clear and specific ways our state legislators could change our current trajectory. Right now our state invests less than 5% of transportation dollars into multimodal transportation, including the funds for every transit system in the state. Tens of millions of people use transit and other active modes, but we invest only a fraction of our budget into their infrastructure and operation. We should be rewarding everyone who rides transit and intercity rail with seamless, accessible, frequent, world-class service to make this choice as appealing as possible. Yet right now we are not even meeting Washington's own identified need for transit funding.

If climate disaster, traffic fatalities, health consequences, and expanding individual opportunity were not enough reasons to change our approach to transportation, we can add fiscal responsibility to the list. Washington currently has a significant backlog of repair and maintenance needs on our existing infrastructure, yet we continue to expand highways each year and increase the roads that need maintaining. If public buildings were deteriorating while the state went on a development spree, it might be more clear to everyone how irresponsible this is from a public finance standpoint.

Dozens of municipalities, organizations, and companies in Washington have called on legislators to pass a sustainable and just transportation package that advances our state's climate and equity goals this year. It is a top or the top priority for both [the Association of Washington Cities](#) and [Washington State Association of Counties](#). This is crucial for our local economies, our communities' safety, as well as our ability to survive long term.

We, the undersigned, are local, county, and Tribal Nation leaders in Washington writing to urge members of the state legislature to pass a sustainable and just transportation package in line with the state's climate and equity goals as soon as possible. Specifically, we hope legislators will pass a package that fully funds our transit needs, fully funds biking and walking infrastructure, accelerates our shift to electric vehicles of all types, prioritizes repair and preservation, and prioritizes a healthy watershed and salmon habitat.

This issue is too important to ignore. A stronger future for our state #TakesTransportation and as leaders working in communities and Tribal Nations across Washington, we are depending on you to make it possible.

Sincerely,

Tribal Nation Leaders

Chair W. Ron Allen, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

County Leaders

County Councilmember Temple Lentz, Clark County

County Councilmember Gary Medvigy, Clark County

County Commissioner Kate Dean, Chair of Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners
and Chair, Jefferson Transit Authority Board

County Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour, Jefferson County
County Councilmember Rod Dembowski, King County
County Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles, King County
County Councilmember Joe McDermott, King County
County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove, King County
County Councilmember Girmay Zahilay, King County
County Councilmember Marty Campbell, Pierce County
County Councilmember Jani Hitchen, Pierce County
County Councilmember Ryan Mello, Pierce County
County Councilmember Derek Young, Pierce County
County Commissioner Frank Wolfe, Pacific County
County Councilmember Megan Dunn, Snohomish County

City Leaders

Mayor Janet Conklin, City of Bridgeport
Mayor Jay McGowan, City of Cle Elum
Mayor Bruce Tabb, City of Ellensburg
Mayor Hunter T. George, City of Fircrest
Mayor Kit Kuhn, City of Gig Harbor
Mayor David Baker, City of Kenmore
Mayor Penny Sweet, City of Kirkland
Mayor Jennifer Gregerson, City of Mukilteo
Mayor Linda Newing, City of Newcastle
Mayor Angela Birney, City of Redmond
Mayor Will Hall, City of Shoreline
Mayor Alex Kovach, City of Soap Lake
Mayor Marylou Kriner, City of Tonasket
Mayor Allan Ekberg, City of Tukwila
Mayor Pro Tem, Clark Gilman, City of Olympia
Mayor Pro Tem Josh Putnam, City of Pacific
Deputy Mayor Veronica Messing, City of Airway Heights
Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold, City of Kirkland
Deputy Mayor Wendy Weiker, City of Mercer Island
City Council President Victoria Hunt, City of Issaquah
City Council President Breean Beggs, City of Spokane
Councilmember Liz Ellis, City of Aberdeen
Councilmember Bruce McDougall, City of Anacortes
Councilmember Carolyn Moulton, City of Anacortes
Councilmember Ryan Walters, City of Anacortes
Councilmember Debora Nelson, City of Arlington
Councilmember Marilyn Oertle, City of Arlington
Councilmember Jan Schuette, City of Arlington
Councilmember Brenda Fantroy-Johnson, City of Bainbridge Island
Councilmember Leslie Schneider, City of Bainbridge Island

Councilmember Daniel Hammill, City of Bellingham
Councilmember Gene Knutson, City of Bellingham
Councilmember Michael Lilliquist, City of Bellingham
Councilmember Catherine Kiewit, City of Bingen
Councilmember Mason Thompson, City of Bothell
Councilmember Kevin Schilling, City of Burien
Councilmember Nancy Tosta, City of Burien
Councilmember Adair Hawkins, City of Carnation
Councilmember Teresa Overhauser, City of Cheney
Councilmember Michael Criner, Town of Concrete
Councilmember Luisa Bangs, City of Des Moines
Councilmember Nate Lowry, City of Edgewood
Councilmember Luke Distelhorst, City of Edmonds
Councilmember Adrienne Frayley-Monillas, City of Edmonds
Councilmember Nancy Lilliquist, City of Ellensburg
Councilmember Mike Cooper, City of Elma
Councilmember-elect Paula Rhyne, City of Everett
Councilmember Paul Roberts, City of Everett
Councilmember Kate Bishop, City of Ferndale
Councilmember Ryan O'Larey, City of Ferndale
Councilmember Jeni Woock, City of Gig Harbor
Councilmember Barbara de Michele, City of Issaquah
Councilmember Angela Kugler, City of Kenmore
Councilmember Kelli Curtis, City of Kirkland
Councilmember Jon Pascal, City of Kirkland
Councilmember Linda Farmer, City of Lakewood
Councilmember Sue Svendsen, City of Long Beach
Councilmember Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, City of Lynnwood
Councilmember Timothy Ceder, City of Milton
Councilmember Richard Brocksmith, City of Mount Vernon
Councilmember Bob Peterson, City of Ocean Shores
Councilmember Lisa Scott, City of Ocean Shores
Councilmember Dani Madrone, City of Olympia
Councilmember Mike French, City of Port Angeles
Councilmember Charlie McCaughan, City of Port Angeles
Councilmember Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin, City of Port Angeles, and Chair of the Clallam

Transit Board of Directors

Councilmember Jeralee Anderson, City of Redmond
Councilmember Jessica Forsythe, City of Redmond
Councilmember Vanessa Kritzer, City of Redmond
Councilmember Valerie O'Halloran, City of Renton
Councilmember Ryan McIrvine, City of Renton
Councilmember Ed Prince, City of Renton
Councilmember Philip Lemley, City of Richland

Councilmember Jeff Adams, City of Roslyn
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Councilmember Takele Gobena, City of SeaTac
Councilmember Lisa Herbold, City of Seattle
Councilmember Debora Juarez, City of Seattle
Councilmember Alex Pedersen, City of Seattle
Councilmember Kshama Sawant, City of Seattle
Councilmember Rachel Anderson, City of Sequim
Councilmember Doris Fujioka McConnell, City of Shoreline
Councilmember Chris Roberts, City of Shoreline
Councilmember Betsy Robertson, City of Shoreline
Councilmember Gene Egan, City of Skykomish
Councilmember Linda Redmon, City of Snohomish
Councilmember Trace DeGarmo, City of Sprague
Councilmember Chris Beale, City of Tacoma
Councilmember Catherine Ushka, City of Tacoma
Councilmember Kristina Walker, City of Tacoma
Councilmember Naila Duval, City of Toppenish
Councilmember Cyntia Delostrinos Johnson, City of Tukwila
Councilmember Zak Idan, City of Tukwila
Councilmember Jack Galloway, City of Union Gap
Councilmember Kent D. Keel, City of University Place, Chair of Sound Transit Board, President
of the Association of Washington Cities
Councilmember Ty Stober, City of Vancouver
Councilmember Ben Nelson, City of Winthrop
Councilmember Susan Boundy-Sanders, City of Woodinville
Councilmember Philip Mark, City of Woodinville
Councilmember Eliana Macias, City of Yakima
Councilmember Molly Carmody, City of Yelm

Additional signers as of November 16, 2021

Mayor Nicola Smith, City of Lynnwood
Mayor Pete Kmet, City of Tumwater
Mayor John Hodkinson, City of Union Gap
Mayor Caroline Belleci, City of University Place
Mayor Marla Keethler, City of White Salmon
Mayor Pro Tem Steve Worthington, City of University Place
Councilmember Malcolm Miller, City of Lacey
Councilmember Alexander Heredia, City of Mattawa
Councilmember Dan Sander, City of Millwood
Councilmember Judy Chipman, City of Ridgefield
Councilmember Denise McCluskey, City of University Place

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