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# Global Warming Mitigation and Adaptation

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Local Government Global Warming Mitigation and Adaptation Program

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Rogers Weed, Director

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **Washington State Department of Commerce**

Karen Larkin, Assistant Director, Local Government and Infrastructure Division

Leonard Bauer, AICP, Managing Director, Growth Management Services

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Senior Planner, Growth Management Services

Linda Weyl, Office Support Supervisor, Growth Management Services

Department of Commerce  
Local Government and Infrastructure Division  
Growth Management Services  
1011 Plum Street Southeast  
P.O. Box 42525  
Olympia, WA 98504-2525  
<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/>

To obtain a copy of this report in an alternate format, please call (360) 725-2895 or TTY/TDD (800) 634-4473 or FAX (360) 586-7176.

## **Overview**

In 2008 the Legislature passed Senate Bill 6580 related to mitigating the impacts of climate change through the Growth Management Act (GMA). Section 3 of SB 6580 (RCW 36.70A.5801) established the Local Government Global Warming Mitigation and Adaptation Program (LGGWMA or “program”). The program is to be administered by the Department of Commerce (formerly the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development) and expires January 1, 2011.

The purpose of the program is to assist selected counties and cities in addressing climate change through land use and transportation planning processes. The Department of Commerce was to offer technical assistance and competitive grants for up to three counties and six cities related to planning work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce dependence on foreign oil, or plan for adaptation measures for climate change impacts.

In 2008 the Legislature and Governor were grappling with significant budget constraints. As a result, Governor Gregoire included this statement in her partial veto message of SB 6580, stating:

*“Section 3 establishes a voluntary pilot global warming mitigation and adaptation program for up to three counties and up to six cities. The Department is required to provide grants and technical assistance to local governments who are addressing climate change through their land use plans. Only partial funding was provided for the pilot program -- enough for the Department to provide limited technical assistance, but not enough to provide state grant funds to the pilot jurisdictions. I ask the Department to encourage local jurisdictions that have their own resources to begin, on a voluntary basis, to address the role of land use and transportation planning in mitigating climate change. However, given the state's budget forecast, I strongly believe that additional state funding for the pilots will not be available next biennium.”*

As Governor Gregoire predicted, the Local Government Global Warming and Adaptation Program was not funded to provide grants to local governments. As a result, the program efforts focused on providing technical assistance to local governments working on climate change mitigation and/or adaptation planning. The technical assistance work was coordinated closely with related efforts, such as the Climate Action Team recommendations<sup>1</sup>, the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee recommendations<sup>2</sup>, and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) climate change policy guidance<sup>3</sup>.

This report includes recommendations for additional funding as previously reported by the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee. Due to the state's significant budget constraints, the Department is not requesting additional funding for this topic during the 2011-13 biennium.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/2008CAT\\_overview.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/2008CAT_overview.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/growthmgt.htm>, SB 6580, adopted 2008

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/sepa.htm>

In addition, Commerce tracked and reported to local governments on related land use, transportation, and energy guidance being issued by federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Housing and Urban Development, and the US Department of Transportation. These three federal agencies have partnered to provide consolidated information, technical assistance, and grant funding related to climate change<sup>4</sup>.

### **Summary of Commerce Technical Assistance to Local Governments**

- A Climate Change [webpage](#) that includes examples of different approaches to address climate change issues including planning policies, greenhouse gas emissions analysis tools, and useful resources.
- An electronic library of example climate action plans and sustainability plans, resolutions, and ordinances related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through land use and transportation planning. These resources include examples from local cities and counties, example policies from other states, and guidance from federal agencies. Commerce staff shares these resources with local governments as part of our direct technical assistance.
- A report on the tools available to assist local or regional governments in assessing greenhouse gas emissions likely to result from the implementation of land use and transportation plans or subarea plans. Over 60 tools were assessed for applicability in Washington State. Eight tools were deemed to be the most promising and further reviewed. Each tool has its strengths and weaknesses. As part of the review we developed a “decision tree” to help local governments identify the tool most likely to meet their needs and budgets. The report, an overview of the tools, and the appendices are available on the Commerce website (click [here](#) to access). The report also includes an estimate of the reductions in emissions that can be expected from certain measures.
- *Planning for Climate Change*, a [report](#) based on the recommendations of the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee. The report was submitted to the legislature, and shared with local governments, in December, 2008.
- Public outreach through conferences, work sessions, and other educational opportunities to discuss methods for local governments to address climate change impacts and promote the technical assistance tools available for local and regional governments.
- Contributions to the development of guidance for local governments to consider greenhouse gas emissions through environmental review (click [here](#)).
- Participation in the multi-agency team addressing the goals for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled under Executive Order 09-05.
- Advisory committee participation in the update of the Washington Transportation Plan in an effort to better integrate land use and transportation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote multimodal transportation systems.

### **Other Related Efforts:**

- In a joint project with Washington State Department of Transportation and the Thurston Regional Planning Council, Commerce staff participated in a project funded

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<sup>4</sup> <http://epa.gov/dced/partnership/index.html>

- by the Federal Highway Administration. The project included development of an emissions tool aimed at mid-sized regional transportation planning organizations to compare emissions resulting from different land use and transportation scenarios.
- Commerce completed *Meeting the Growth Management Challenge in Growing Communities: The Washington State Growth Management Act Effectiveness Report*, which included an assessment of the preparedness of local governments to address land use changes associated with climate change. Click [here](#) to access report.
  - In 2008, Commerce conducted a survey of local governments across the state. The survey collected information regarding local action and plans to address climate change. The information was used to help build the technical assistance efforts.
  - Commerce participates on the state Commute Trip Reduction Board, where efforts focus on providing commute options to large employers and emphasis on land use and transportation integration in Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTECs).
  - Commerce actively participates in the development of recommendations for the interim integrated climate change response strategy, as directed in Sections 10-12 of Senate Bill 5560 (adopted in 2009, [RCW 43.21M](#)), concentrating on the built environment through communities and infrastructure. In addition, Commerce serves on the Steering Committee convened for this effort.
  - Commerce has increased coordination with other state agencies (specifically Ecology and Transportation) as well as with Municipal Research Services Center staff.
  - Commerce created an Energy Efficiency in Transportation Planning grant program using federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This program provided a total of \$770,000 to eight local governments for the creation and implementation of long-term transportation strategies which reduce fossil fuel emissions and vehicle miles traveled. This program funded projects such as transit station area planning, multimodal transportation concurrency systems, and comprehensive plan amendments to address energy and sustainability.
  - Growth Management Services staff is working directly with the Puget Sound Regional Council, four counties, cities, and the Cascade Land Conservancy on a regional Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program in central Puget Sound. Regional TDR will transfer growth from working farm and forest land, and other state and regionally significant land, in the counties to cities where growth is planned.
  - Commerce has dedicated planning staff from its Growth Management Services program to develop an element within the State Energy Strategy (currently being updated) for how local and state governments can address climate change and energy efficiency through integration of transportation and land use.
  - Commerce and the Department of Transportation partnered with the Clark County Regional Transportation Council on a pilot project to integrate regional transportation and land use planning. The pilot project is sponsored by the National Governor's Association as part of its policy academy to explore cutting-edge methods in this policy area (Click [here](#) for more information).

## **Program Findings**

Due to lack of funding for pilot grants, the program has focused on provision of related technical assistance. It is evident, however, that many local governments are looking for tools and assistance as they seek to address climate change mitigation and adaptation into their planning and programming efforts. Commerce's climate change webpage continues to be frequently visited. The Planning for Climate Change report has been downloaded over 4,600 times. The greenhouse gas emissions tools page continues to be one of the Departments' most frequently visited internet sites. The summary and report regarding the emissions tools was posted to the Department's website in December of 2008. Since January 1, 2009, the tools report has been downloaded over 14,000 times.

## **Mitigation and Adaptation Information**

Commerce has worked diligently to provide technical assistance on both mitigation (the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (preparing for impacts resulting from climate change). Most state efforts began with a purpose of reducing GHG emissions. More recently, the state has taken action specifically targeted at adaptation. Growth Management Services is working in both arenas and expects the technical assistance webpage to expand to include additional information related to adaptation.

Commerce continues to work with other state agencies toward consistent communication on climate change science and issues with both local governments and the general public. An example guide for this type of communication was produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in partnership with other federal organizations. They developed a general science communications guide to help convey complex information in an easy to understand manner ([Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Sciences](#)).

## **Economic Considerations**

Positive and negative impacts to housing affordability, transportation costs, economic development, and employment were considered as part of the Land Use and Climate Change (LUCC) Advisory Committee efforts. To view their analysis, please see "Considerations of Positive and Negative Impacts from Addressing Climate Change" on page 25 of the [report](#), as well as the bibliography in Appendix M.

In addition, there have been a handful of economic studies related to climate change since the LUCC work was conducted in 2008. In 2009 the "*Impacts of Climate Change on Washington's Economy*" report was released. Click [here](#) to access the report. The 2009 report was based on information provided in "[Impacts of Climate Change on Washington's Economy: A Preliminary Assessment of Risks and Opportunities](#)" prepared in 2006. The Washington State Department of Ecology is currently working on an update to the economic analysis that should be available at the time this report is delivered to the Legislature.

The State of California has been considering economic impacts of their Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. Information is provided on the California Air Resources Board [website](#).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a portion of their website dedicated to climate change issues. They have a page dedicated to the topic of climate economics. Click [here](#) to view the EPA Climate Economics webpage.

## **Recommendations**

This report includes recommendations for additional funding as previously reported by the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee. Due to the state's significant budget constraints, the Department is not requesting additional funding for this topic during the 2011-13 biennium.

Without pilot projects to analyze there are not typical or significant recommendations related to the Local Government Global Warming Mitigation and Adaptation Program. However, we have received comments from those who have contacted Commerce for technical assistance. Of those who provided comments, most were concerned that the work they are proceeding with may not meet potential future state requirements. They were concerned about having to re-address these issues in the future, or to have new requirements added in the future that they hadn't yet considered. Some were reluctant to move forward until such a time as a state requirement or framework is adopted. Almost all expressed interest in provision of state guidance on how to address climate change mitigation and adaptation in the comprehensive planning processes. Several expressed interest in analyzing greenhouse gas emissions during the environmental review for the plans or subarea plans, rather than on a project-by-project basis; however all expressed concern about the additional expense associated with upfront environmental review.

## **Policy Recommendations**

The Land Use and Climate Change (LUCC) Advisory Committee made several policy recommendations (click [here](#) to access report) related to the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The LUCC policy recommendations included:

- amendments to the GMA goals, countywide planning policy requirements, and regional consistency provisions;
- amendments to SEPA to encourage and fund upfront environmental review that would result in streamlined permitting for compact development in urban growth areas or urban centers, including modification of the Planning Environmental Review Fund to be funded and turned into a revolving loan fund with revised criteria;
- transportation provisions to better enable GMA transportation concurrency to address all modes, to update and provide better transportation technical assistance from the state, and to require local governments to provide level of service (LOS) standards for all available or planned for modes of transportation and to require local governments to consider multimodal improvements or strategies in their transportation concurrency regulations;
- to require state agencies to provide technical guidance to local governments that voluntarily choose to use developer incentives to encourage compact development;
- to encourage use of financing tools for local governments to encourage compact development in urban centers or other targeted areas within urban growth areas;

- to support the prioritization of existing infrastructure funds to areas promoting development and transportation choices that support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil,
- to support the prioritization of new infrastructure funds to areas promoting development and transportation choices that support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil; and
- to support development of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs.

In addition to considering the recommendations of the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee, the Legislature may wish to consider amendment to the Growth Management Act to establish a framework that identifies which climate change issues local governments should or must address in their comprehensive planning processes.

#### Funding Recommendations

In 2008, the LUCC also made recommendations related to funding. Their recommendations were divided into three priority areas as follows:

Priority Area 1: No backsliding on current funding provided to local governments to support planning and implementation under the GMA (assumes sufficient funding of infrastructure to meet obligations).

Priority Area 2: Provide counties and cities more flexibility in use of existing funding sources to support accommodating growth and density in urban areas.

Priority Area 3: Provide counties and cities with opportunities for new funds to support local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions reductions (intent is a shared state and local responsibility, includes new revenue from any cap and trade funds).

In addition to considering the recommendations of the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee, the Legislature may wish to consider increased funding for the next round of periodic updates under the Growth Management Act, to help local governments address any new requirements related to climate change issues.

#### Additional Recommendations

Commerce recommends support for additional amendments related to the Planning Environmental Review Fund (PERF). The amendments would allow PERF to become a revolving loan fund and would allow local governments that conduct upfront environmental review to charge a fee from the developers who benefit from the streamlined permitting.