



[www.bluegreenalliance.org/wa](http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/wa)

## **Washington State BlueGreen Alliance – Climate Policy Principles**

*The Washington State BlueGreen Alliance recognizes that climate change is an urgent threat. Climate action presents the opportunity and the imperative to build resilient infrastructure, improve community and worker health and safety, safeguard wildlife, secure and create family-supporting jobs and economic opportunities, and establish sustainability for all people. We support climate policies that meet the following criteria:*

### **Effective Climate Action**

Climate policy must be science-based and effective at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and delivering solutions. Climate science doesn't negotiate; the scale and pace of climate solutions must match the scale and urgency of the actual challenge. The costs of not taking sufficient action will be unacceptably high, and therefore integrity and accountability for results are vital.

Washington has what it takes to be a leader in the clean energy transition.

### **Economic and Social Equity**

We must ensure that changes in our economy and society are feasible and fair for workers and communities most dependent on fossil fuel industries. This must also be true for communities with lower incomes that are hit first and worst by climate change while being least able to afford increased costs related to a transition to a clean energy economy.

Policies should be economy wide and must include compliance flexibility in a way that prevents "leakage," whereby greenhouse gas emissions – as well as jobs – migrate out of the state or overseas to less regulated areas. Compliance flexibility for energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries is particularly important, and should include incentives for businesses to improve their energy efficiency or to reduce lifecycle impacts of their products, thereby rewarding the best actors while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating and securing jobs.

Policies must also benefit communities of color and lower income communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change and energy costs. The benefits to vulnerable populations and communities of color must outweigh the policy's costs, including support to ensure affordable energy and transportation services.

### **Investing in an Equitable Future**

Revenue raised by a climate pricing policy should be net positive for the state, and should be invested in ways that ensure workers and communities have real access to the economic and environmental benefits of a clean energy transition.

Deep energy efficiency retrofits, clean energy infrastructure, water systems and storage, public transit, and electric vehicle infrastructure are among the areas where investments could be made that would reduce our carbon footprint, enhance adaptation to and resiliency in the face of climate change, while creating tens of thousands of family wage union jobs. Investments made directly in impacted communities and which support local employment will be particularly beneficial.

Policies should include domestic content provisions and use a life-cycle carbon footprint analysis when making procurement decisions. This will help reduce the carbon emissions related to materials as well as supporting domestic jobs and industries.

### **A Truly Just Transition**

The transition to a clean energy economy will not be easy, and it will take time. Just transition policies must protect existing jobs as much as possible while also providing tangible support for both impacted workers and communities. Support for workers should include wage-replacement, benefits, training and education subsidies, job placement support, and, if necessary, relocation stipends. Support for impacted communities should aim to replace tax revenue that may be lost during the transition, and to provide local economic development and employment opportunities in the existing and emerging clean energy economy.

A Just Transition Fund must be established to provide impacted workers and communities with the support they need and deserve.

### **Oversight**

Policies should include oversight by a body such as an Economic and Environmental Justice Board that delivers inclusive engagement and oversight by lower income communities, communities of color, and direct line workers.

### **Complementary Policies**

We will not solve the urgent problems of climate change and inequality with a single policy. Good climate policy must also be complemented by other equitable policies at the local, state, national and international levels that further support the principles described in this document.

**The Washington State BlueGreen Alliance** seeks to align the interests of labor unions, environmental and community organizations to address our biggest environmental challenges in a way that creates and maintains family-sustaining jobs and protects the health of workers and their communities.

<http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/work/states/washington>