

# Exposing False Solutions

## How Washington's Cap and Trade Program Gives Industrial Polluters a Free Pass

Front and Centered opposes approaches to the climate crisis that rely on pollution trading marketplaces which promise a solution to fossil fuel pollution, but don't require any specific polluters to actually slow or stop emissions. As the Washington State Department of Ecology develops rules to implement the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), **frontline communities are sounding the alarm around the potential impacts of this pollution trading scheme**, particularly the free pass given to some of the largest greenhouse gas emissions polluters in our state, including oil refineries, agriculture interests, and aerospace.

The cap-and-trade scheme in the CCA allows toxic pollution to continue unabated through the trading of "allowances" to pollute, through "offsets" that don't address the problem at the source, and through creating a pollution marketplace and carve-outs where buying, banking, and selling of allowances are prioritized over cutting emissions.

"We cannot trade or offset the ability of our communities to breathe."

In a new report, [Exposing False Solutions: How Washington's Cap and Trade Program Gives Industrial Polluters a Free Pass](#), Front and Centered explores a CCA policy that provides allowances to many of Washington's biggest polluters.

### Key findings of our report include:

- Providing heavy polluting industries with cap-and-trade allowances at no cost will allow at least nine-tenths of total current industrial carbon emissions to continue free of charge through 2034, delaying the essential switch to low-carbon technology.
- This policy allows a pathway for industries to *increase emissions* through changes in production volume, which will prolong and worsen environmental justice impacts here in Washington, especially for frontline communities.
- This policy of carbon trading with industrial allowances provided free of charge has failed to reduce industrial emissions elsewhere. *We must choose a different policy solution to ensure climate stabilization and environmental justice.*
- Only direct, facility-specific industrial emission standards will achieve deep emission cuts and ensure that state climate and environmental justice goals are realized.

Facing the devastating impacts of our climate crisis, frontline communities in Washington know that *clear and direct limits on every emissions intensive industry source* is necessary to respond to our climate crisis and advance environmental justice. In contrast, carbon trading prioritizes *industry flexibility and profits*, kicking the can down the road.

**This is by design and it is not climate justice.** Policymakers are tinkering with solutions at the margin in collaboration with the biggest polluters while ecosystems that support life are collapsing. We must learn from the experiences of our communities and **fight for solutions that reduce local emissions and pollution at the source**, not programs that disregard disparities in and perpetuate the destructive practice of sacrifice zones.



### A Front and Centered Report

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