

Communities of color and low-income communities are on the frontlines of the climate and environmental crisis. This year, our coalition of frontline communities has chosen to focus on reducing pollution in our most at-risk and overburdened communities and ensuring that state budget allocations meet mandated obligations to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

The Cumulative Risk Burden (CURB) Pollution Act

Communities that have historically borne the worst effects of pollution due to redlining and institutional racism shouldn't continue to bear the ongoing harm being inflicted on their health, well-being, and even life expectancy today. Yet under current laws, the process that permits businesses to pollute is not required to consider the effects of our history of environmental racism and the cumulative health risk and burden the most impacted communities face. We all suffer when we allow these environmental injustices to continue, but we can do something about it. The CURB Pollution Act:

- **Requires the consideration of pollutants** affecting health that currently go unaddressed.
- **Specifies communities that have been disproportionately harmed** by pollution for specific protections.
- Requires a lead agency to **deny permit applications for new facilities that add cumulative pollution effects and work with applicants seeking permit renewals that add cumulative pollution effects**, with the goal of reducing pollution over time.
- Elevates voices of community members through frontline **community participation in the permit evaluations process**.

Environmental Justice 40 — Investing Public Monies

Ensure all state funds live up to the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act goal of directing that 40 percent of environment-related funds create environmental benefits to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and prevent harm. This includes all state funds derived from carbon pricing, operating and transportation, capital funds, and all federal funds, also subject to the Justice40 White House environmental justice initiative. Specific community priorities for climate investments include:

- **Improving Accountability:** When allocating investments dedicated to benefitting vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, it must be explicit, transparent, and not left to assumptions.
- **Sustained Investments:** The legislature made important investments in community capacity building and participatory budgeting that need to be sustained and expanded.
- **New Significant Investments:** Invest in priorities that have been explicitly requested by Frontline Communities, including:
 - **Frontline Community Assemblies:** To identify and organize for frontline priorities, fostering solutions and amplifying the voices of those who go unheard to shape policy and budgets.
 - **Community Climate Development Fund:** A fund for community-controlled land and development put in trust for perpetuity to address climate change.
 - **Improving Pollution Enforcement for Frontline Communities:** Support for efforts to center frontline communities in reporting and responding to environmental violations.
 - **Clean Communities Program and Energy Ambassadors:** Create a clean energy fund accessible exclusively to frontline communities and support community-based organizers to help clean energy and healthy home programs reach everyone.

Additional Issues Our Coalition is Tracking

Transition Utilities Off Gas: This bill may add planning and service requirements to help transition gas utilities and customers to electric heating, including preventing new gas service lines.

Working Families Tax Credit Expansion: Expand the age range so that all filers 18 and older can access the credit, ensuring that young adult workers and working seniors are fully included.

Transit-oriented Development: Reduced automobile dependency, improved air quality, affordable housing, and equitable access to transit through effective land use.



Our Statewide Coalition

Front and Centered is led by communities of color, Indigenous peoples, and communities with lower incomes who are on the frontlines of the climate and environmental crisis. Our coalition of frontline communities advocates for ***the right to a healthy environment for all*** by ***rooting out disparities***. We are convening, generating, and analyzing data; building alignment; and mobilizing our communities. We aim to advance a Just Transition for Washington State by ***shifting power to frontline communities, stopping what harms us, and building the future we need.***

Photo by Rasaan Burke