



Legislative Session Scorecard: Climate Funding Includes Important Investments in Environmental Justice, But Opportunities Remain Unfulfilled

March 23, 2023 - Today, the Washington State Senate released its [2023-25 Biennium Operating Budget Proposal](#), following their Capital Budget, and despite claims by lawmakers and a mandate from the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), **proposed investments in communities most overburdened by pollution fall short.**

Under the CCA, at least 35% of the revenues generated in carbon market auctions must fund “direct and meaningful benefits” to communities overburdened by pollution and climate change, and an additional 10% must be formally supported by a tribe. Yet today’s budget bills tell a different story:

- Of the \$319 million in the Senate Capital Budget from Climate Commitment Act investments, **only 5% is explicitly dedicated to benefiting non-tribal overburdened communities.**
- Of the \$679 million in the Senate Operating Budget from Climate Commitment Act investments, **only 15% is explicitly to benefiting non-tribal overburdened communities.**

The Senate Budget does have some exciting proposals aligned with frontline communities’ needs, including \$10 million to support workers most impacted by climate change, \$38 million toward community participatory budgeting, funding for energy assistance programs, and continued funding for the [Health Environment for All \(HEAL\) Act](#). However, the Senate needs to make their commitments and their investment in overburdened communities more clear.

For example, California [spent 48% of their climate funds on benefiting frontline communities](#), with large investments in public transit, green affordable housing, and community air protections. Our Senate may be depending on the transportation budget to fill the gap, but **communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis deserve for each budget to make equitable investments in climate justice.**

“Communities overburdened by pollution have been promised investments as a result of the Climate Commitment Act, but **the Senate’s initial proposal has our frontline**

communities asking: where did those commitments go?” said Deric Gruen, Co-executive Director of Programs and Policy at Front and Centered.

“Our state recently sold millions of carbon allowances totaling around \$300 million. **Meaningful investments from this revenue must be directed toward the expressed needs of communities who are historically and disproportionately impacted by pollution, and who stand to lose the most from a program that incentivizes but doesn’t guarantee that they’ll see reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.”**

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