



Media Statement: Did Legislature Live Up to Environmental Justice Promise in State Budget?

March 7, 2024 -- On March 6, the Washington State Legislature passed the final supplemental capital, transportation, and operating budgets and sent them to Governor Jay Inslee for his signature.

*The following is a statement from **Guillermo Rogel Jr., Legislative and Government Relations Advocate** with Front and Centered:*

“Over the last 60 days, the Front and Centered Coalition provided budget writers in the legislature with priorities that help boost environmental and climate justice investments. **While we see important wins for our community in this budget, we remain concerned that the legislature is not meeting its obligations to overburdened communities.**”

“Front and Centered—along with our partners at the People’s Economy Lab, Statewide Poverty Action Network, and the Department of Social and Health Services—secured \$2,000,000 in funding for Community Assemblies. These assemblies will amplify community expertise and solutions for budget and policy makers, focusing on sustainable investments aimed at fostering a more climate-resilient Washington. Other key victories include funding for Clean Energy Community Grants and Clean Energy Ambassadors, though funding for both items was significantly reduced compared to Governor Inslee’s proposed budget.

“While we saw some positive investments, we are concerned that the state legislature is not meeting its obligation to fund overburdened communities. In California, the only other state with a cap-and-trade program, [73% of that program’s revenue](#) is dedicated to frontline communities. Our preliminary analysis shows that **only 21% of qualifying funds in Washington State are directed to overburdened communities in this year’s supplemental budget, well below the 40% goal** set by the Climate

Commitment Act (CCA) and the [Healthy Environment for All \(HEAL\) Act](#).” [[See our previous analysis of 2023–2025 biennial budget](#).]

“In addition to meeting their funding obligation the legislature must demonstrate to frontline communities what positive health outcomes and climate resiliency they can anticipate as a result of the CCA. **We demand that budget writers hold themselves accountable to the environmental justice funding obligations in the HEAL Act and the CCA.** We welcome an ongoing conversation with legislators, state agencies, community organizations, and other interested parties to figure out how the state can meet its obligation to fund community-based solutions and reduce environmental health disparities.”

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