



PHOTO: JOHN WESTROCK

2018 ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

The Environmental Priorities Coalition is made up of more than 20 statewide organizations working to safeguard our environment and the health of our communities in the legislature. For the 2018 legislative session, we have adopted four priorities essential for healthy communities and a thriving environment.

ACT ON CLIMATE

Despite the fact that climate change impacts are already felt here at home, many in the fossil fuel industry are working to undo years of climate progress, especially at the federal level. That's why the state of Washington must step up. The faster we act, the faster we can show what is possible. We need to charge major polluters for the harm they cause and reinvest those dollars for a better future. Stronger, climate-driven investments will create good home-grown jobs, accelerate clean energy solutions to compete in a global market, protect our health and safety, and ensure a resilient environment. We must also prioritize investments where communities are disproportionately impacted by air pollution and climate change threats, and ensure a just transition for workers currently reliant on the fossil fuel economy. In the face of serious and escalating climate change risks – devastating wildfires, water shortages, flooding catastrophes, sea level rise, and ocean acidification – 2018 is the year for meaningful action that will move Washington forward.

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SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

We've known for many years that the state's water management system is broken. The environmental community seeks to pass legislation to implement the law and provide more certainty for instream and out-of-stream uses. Water legislation must have three elements: 1) planning for residential development in accordance with available water resources; 2) fully offsetting water usage by mitigating impacts – particularly those that are harmful to salmon; and 3) metering and monitoring water usage to help homeowners, local governments, and the state manage a finite resource. These elements have been successfully applied in the Dungeness basin and upper Yakima watershed in Kittitas County and can help in the many water-short basins of the state.

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ACTION FOR TOXIC-FREE FOOD PACKAGING

The widespread use of toxic nonstick PFAS chemicals in many consumer products and firefighting foam is raising serious health and environmental concerns in the state of Washington. Called “virtually indestructible” by scientists, these extremely persistent, cancer-causing class of chemicals can be found in people, wildlife, and waterways. The Healthy Food Packaging Act protects our food, health, and environment by eliminating one source of these harmful chemicals: food packaging. Used in food packages like microwave popcorn and fast food or bakery wrappers, these toxic nonstick chemicals move from the packaging, to the food, and then into our bodies with each bite. PFAS chemicals also pollute the environment when the food packaging is landfilled or composted and spread on the ground. We should not have to worry about these harmful chemicals unnecessarily contaminating our food or our environment when safer alternatives are available. The Healthy Food Packaging Act is a commonsense solution to this problem.

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OIL SPILL PREVENTION ACT

Washington communities and waterways face many oil spill risks from pipelines, trains, and vessels. These risks continue to grow as the state receives newer oils that sink and are difficult to cleanup. Unfortunately, the state of Washington has fallen behind in applying prevention measures to guard against oil spills. The Oil Spill Prevention Act makes funding for state oversight more fair and reliable, and ensures that the state will fully implement existing marine protections. This bill is an important and overdue step forward for Washington.

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In addition to these priorities, the Coalition is committed to making urgently needed progress on addressing climate change in 2018 through a range of policy bills from promoting efficient and healthy buildings to electrifying our transportation system to diversifying our clean energy sources. These policies will create jobs, reduce harmful pollution, and help Washington compete in a global clean energy economy.

about the coalition

The Environmental Priorities Coalition is a network of over twenty leading environmental groups in Washington state that influence policy at the state level. For over a decade, the Coalition has selected joint priority issues to work on during legislative session to help focus environmental community resources and best achieve our shared goals.

