

Courtesy Grist
magazine

Climate Hope? or Climate Doom?

Climate Doom?

CNN US Crime + Justice Energy + Environment
Hurricane Ida makes its way inland in Louisiana

LIVE UPDATES

Hurricane Ida makes its way inland in Louisiana

Reuters in Brasilia

Thu 1 Oct 2020 11:48 EDT



Fernando Alfonso III, Mike Hayes, Judson Jones

Updated 3:51 a.m. ET, August 28, 2021

Brazil's Amazon rainforest suffers worst fires in a decade

- Satellites record 61% rise in hotspots over September 2019
- Scientist warns: 'It could get worse if the drought continues'

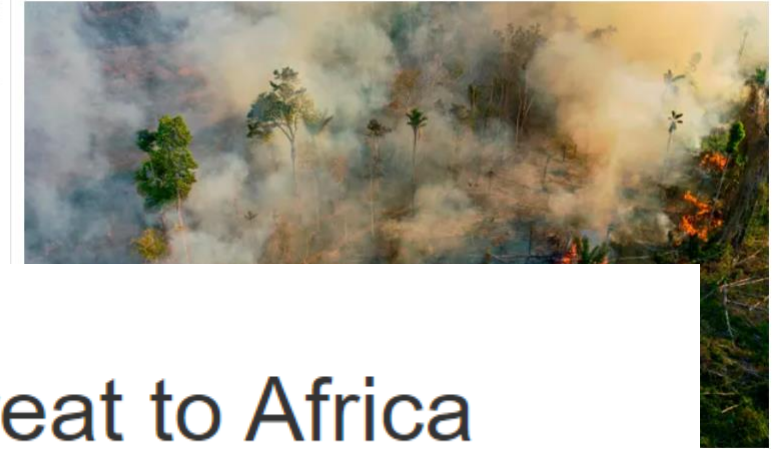
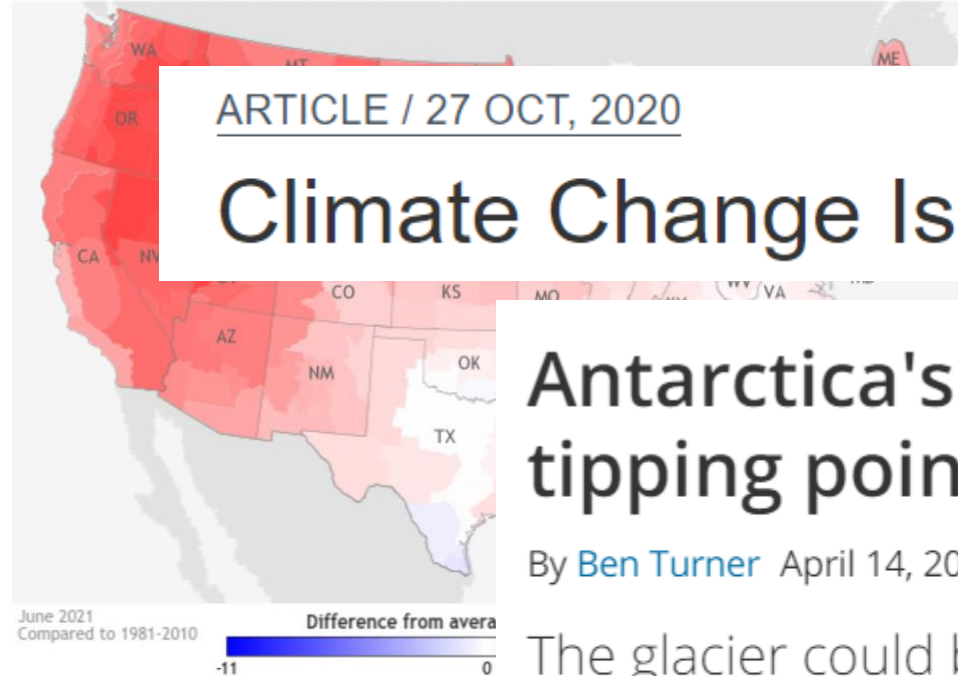


Photo in Para

Hottest June on record for contiguous United States



June 2021
Compared to 1981-2010
Difference from average
-11 0

ARTICLE / 27 OCT, 2020

Climate Change Is an Increasing Threat to Africa

State, Brazil, in August. Photograph: Carl de Souza/AFP/Getty Images

Antarctica's 'Doomsday Glacier' close to tipping point, unmanned sub reveals

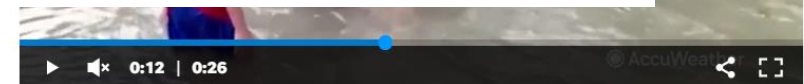
By Ben Turner April 14, 2021

The glacier could be melting at the key points anchoring it to the land.



Source: Nasa Firms. Map by

Capital



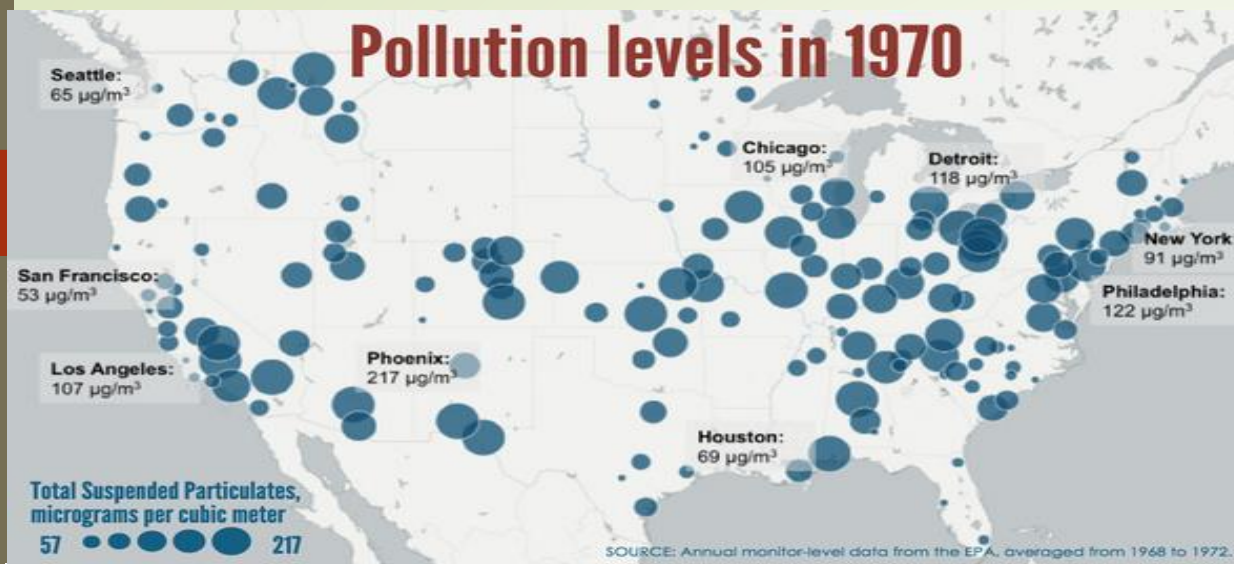
Widespread flooding in Jakarta, Indonesia causes chaos

Residents of Jakarta, Indonesia, waded through flooded streets after heavy rain soaked the city on Feb. 25. Accuweather

U.S. June temperatures compared to 20th-century average

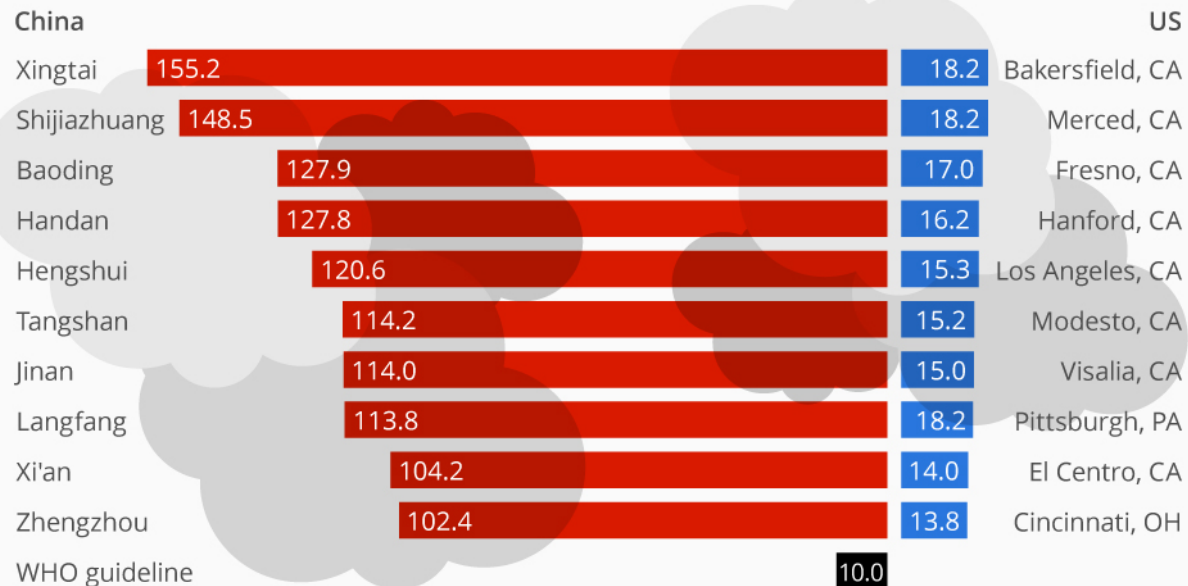


Pollution levels in 1970



Air Pollution Levels In Perspective: China And The US

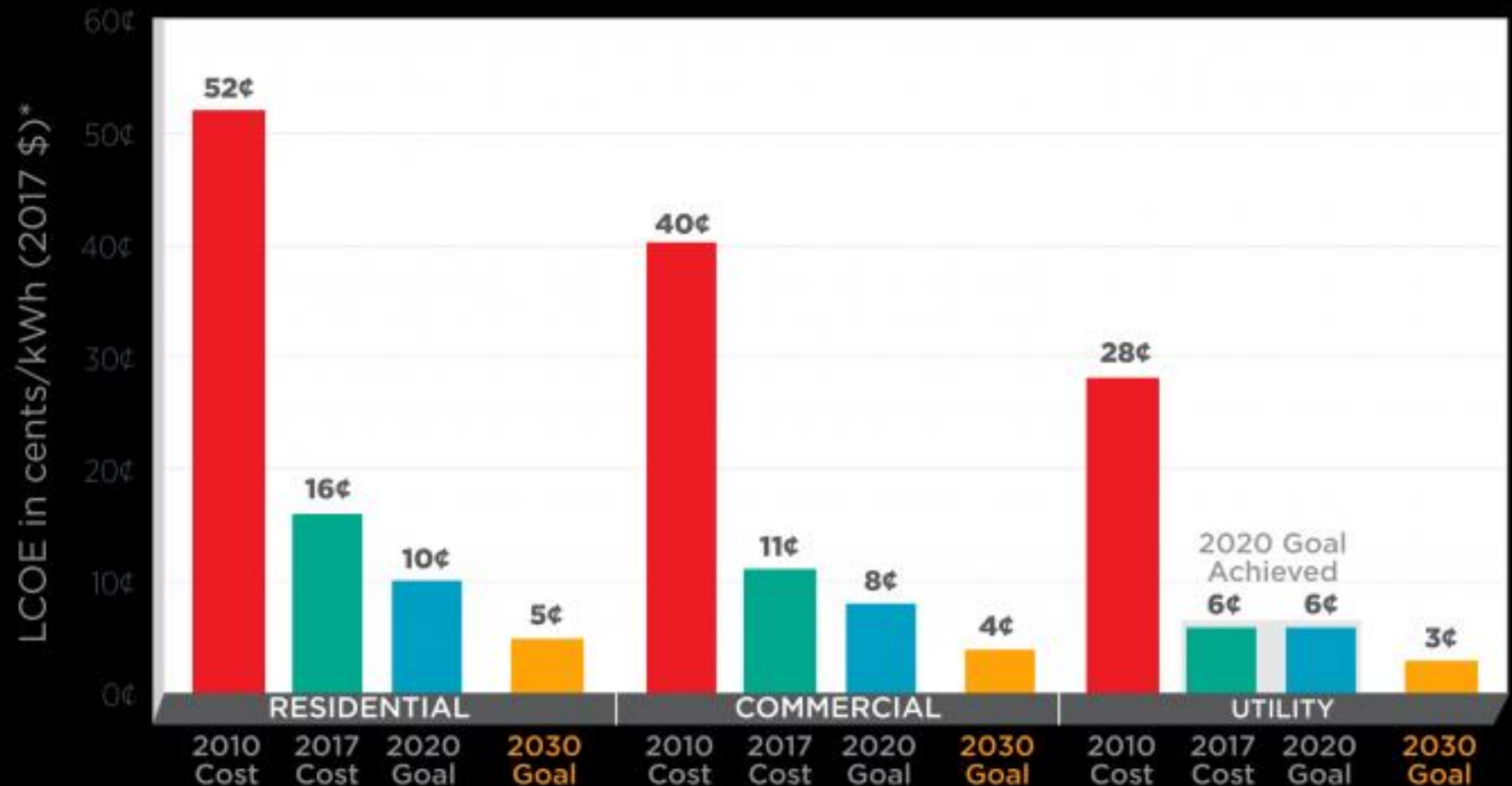
Daily average particulate pollution (PM2.5) in the 10 worst Chinese and US cities*



* Anything over 10 micrograms per cubic meter of PM2.5 considered hazardous to health by WHO

Climate Hope:
Impacts of the
Clean Air Act
(1970 and
subsequent
updates)

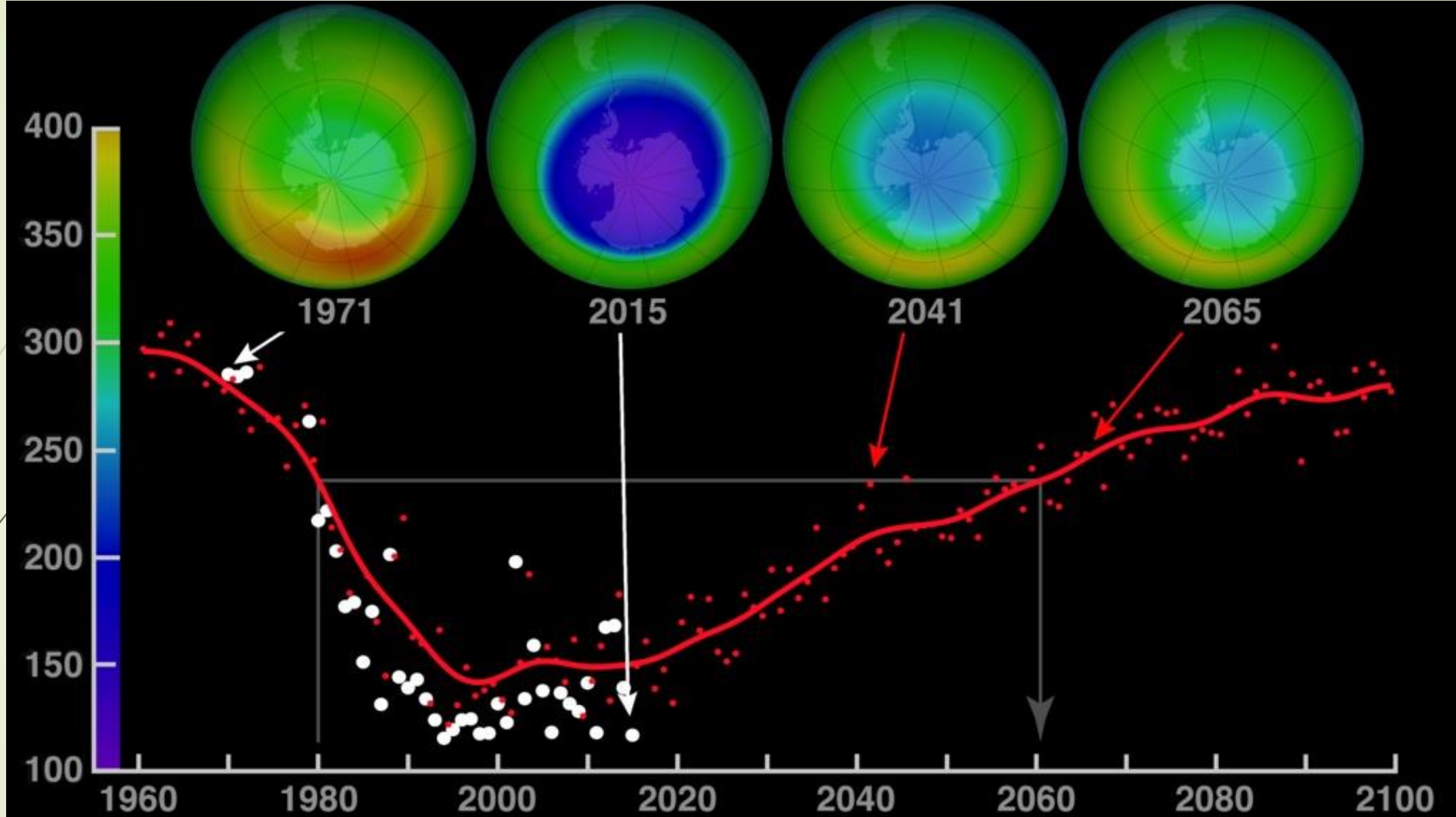
SunShot Progress and Goals



*Levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) progress and targets are calculated based on average U.S. climate and without the ITC or state/local incentives. The residential and commercial goals have been adjusted for inflation from 2010-17.

Climate Hope: The SunShot Initiative ([US Department of Energy 2011](#))

Dobson Units

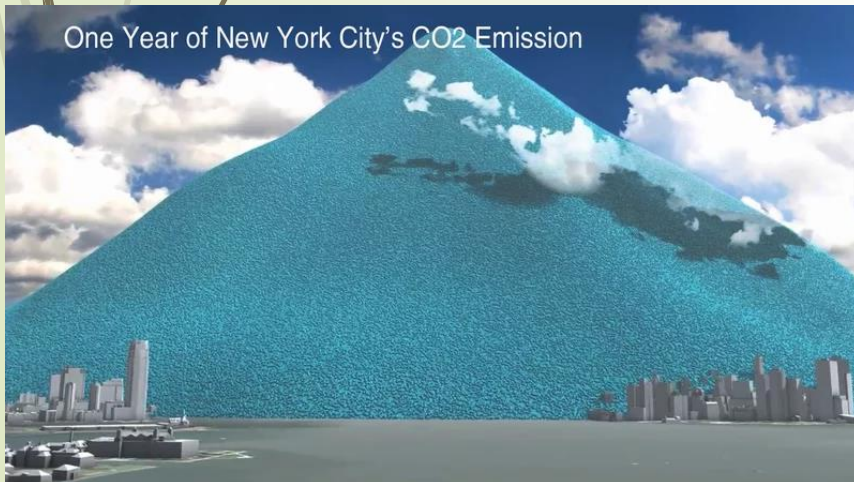
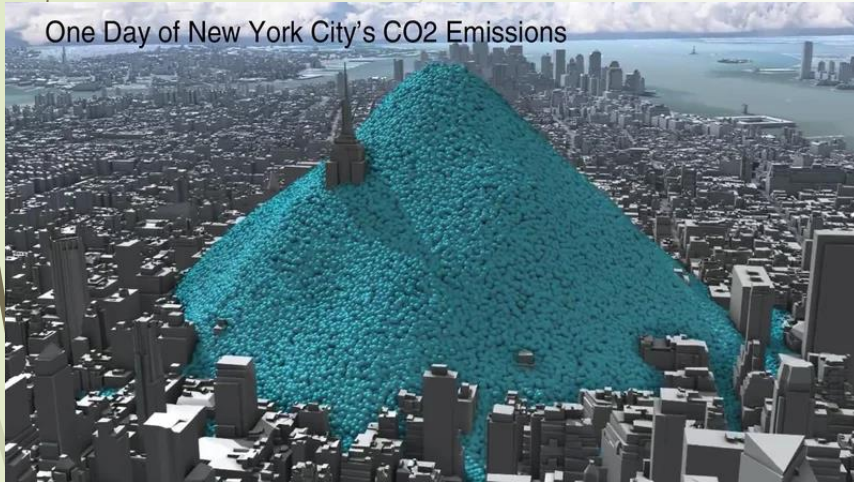


Climate Hope: Ozone Layer and the
Montreal Protocol (1987)



Differentiating **Good** from **Bad** Climate Policy

What makes **good** climate policy?



Good policy addresses the issue head on and doesn't settle for peripheral solutions.

Climate Journalist David Roberts: "Clean electrification is the entrée. Everything else is just a side.... So we can think of the work in two parts. Job One is to rapidly push fossil fuels out of the system using technologies and strategies that we have on hand, such that we reduce carbon emissions by around 50 percent by 2030. Job Two is to research and develop the technologies and strategies we will need to continue rapidly reducing emissions from 2030 onward, such that we hit net-zero on or before 2050."

NYC Annual Emissions= 55 million tons CO2

What makes good climate policy?

Bill Gates: “51 billion and zero.”

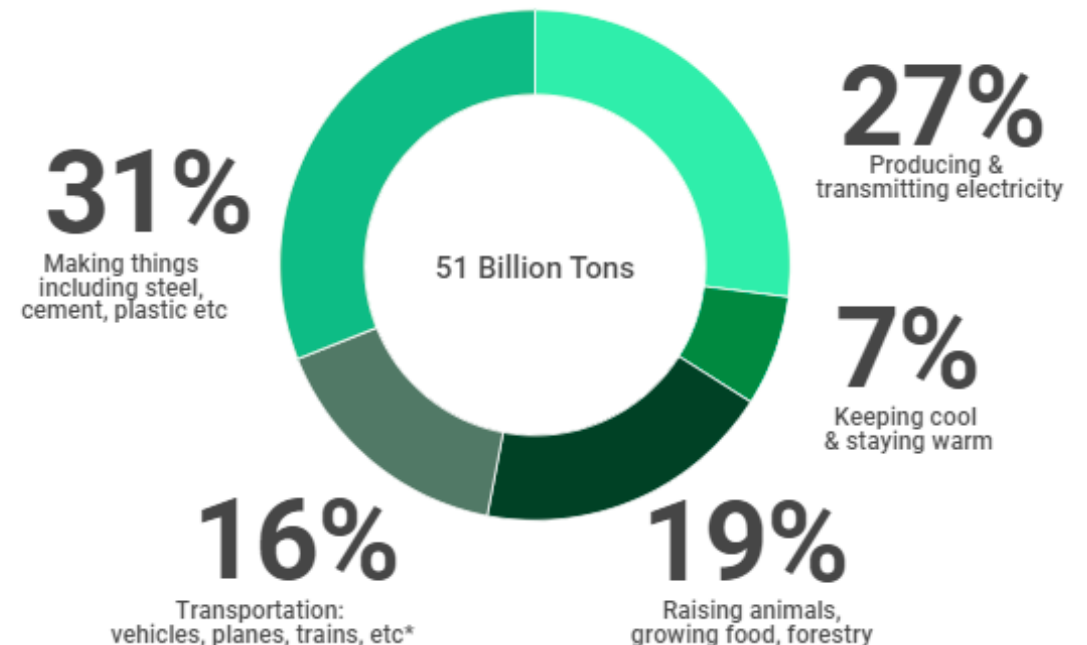
Importance and challenges of reducing global emissions to zero as rapidly as possible.

U.S. Emissions= 6.5 billion Tons in 2019. Washington State approx. 99 million tons (EPA estimate)

Canadian Emissions= 730 million Tons in 2019. British Columbia approx. 62 millions tons.
(Canadian Government estimate)

How It Adds Up Globally: 51 Billion Tons

Emissions dropped about 5% in 2020 due to the pandemic, Gates estimates. But in a normal year the world adds 51 billion tons of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, Gates writes in his book.



*Transportation is the biggest source of emissions in the United States, Gates points out in his book. “We Americans fly and drive a lot.”

Source: *How To Avoid A Climate Disaster*, by Bill Gates.

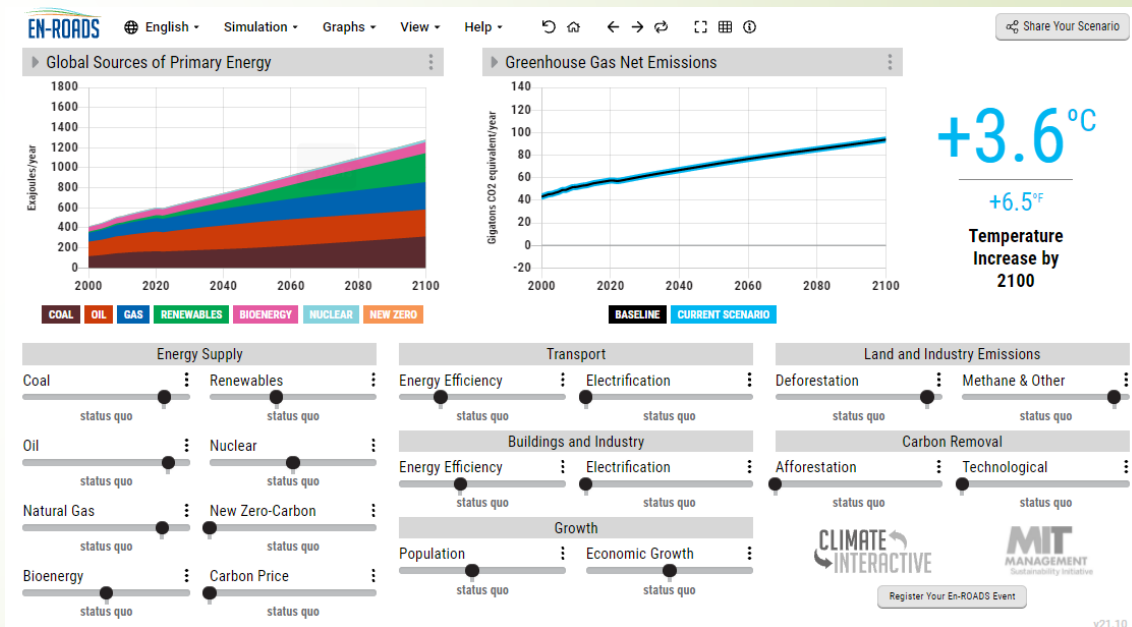
What makes **bad** climate policy?

Bad policy either denies the existence of climate change or supports actions inadequate to the task at hand.

Greenwashing (*def*): disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image.

Which policies lead to curbing the majority of global emissions by 2030, and which don't?

Learning by doing: [En-ROADS](https://climateinteractive.org)
(climateinteractive.org)

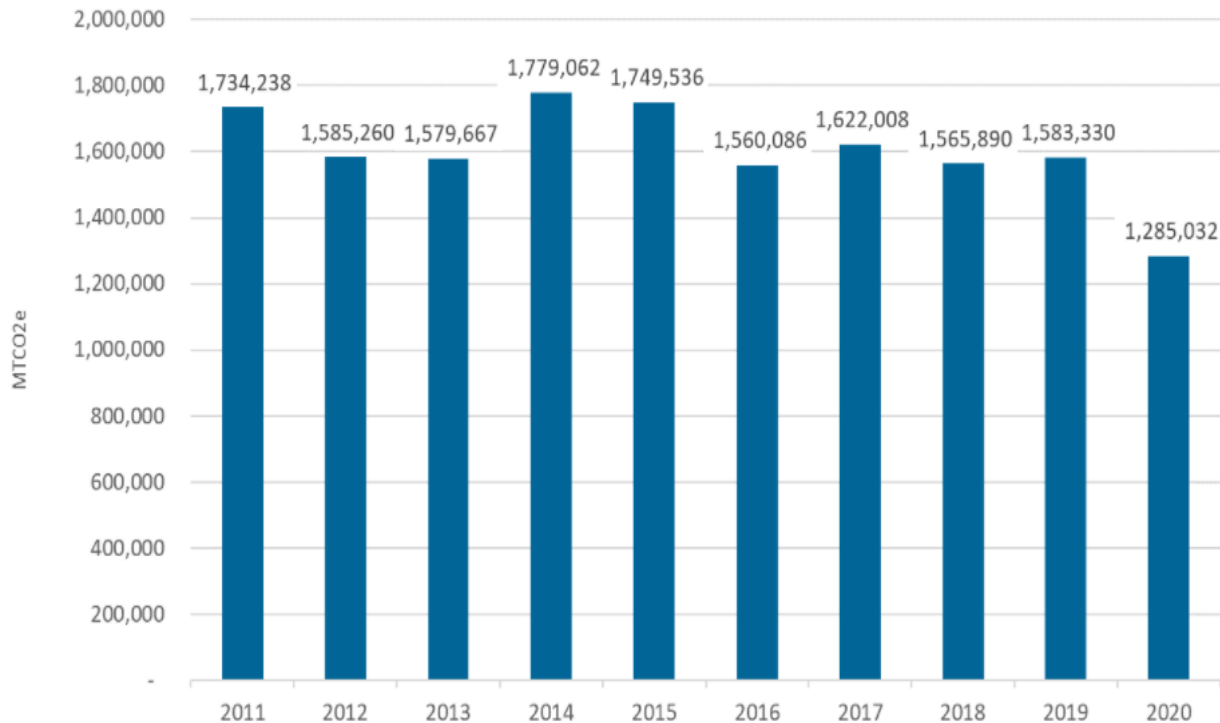




Policy 101: Local, Regional and National

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

26% reduction in community-wide GHG emissions despite 20% population growth.



The image shows the cover of a report titled "GOALS, STRATEGIES & ACTIONS: CLIMATE CHANGE". The cover features a blue background with a white silhouette of a person's head and a thermometer, where the thermometer's bulb is a globe. The text "KEY STRATEGIES" is followed by a bulleted list of four strategies. The bottom right corner features the "SUSTAINABLE BELLEVUE" logo.

GOALS, STRATEGIES & ACTIONS: CLIMATE CHANGE

KEY STRATEGIES

- Mitigate GHG emissions and promote sustainability across sectors.
- Increase resilience to climate change impacts.
- Institutionalize consideration of climate change across City activities and decisions.
- Educate and inform residents, businesses, and City staff about sustainability issues and solutions.

SUSTAINABLE
BELLEVUE

Local Policy:
Bellevue, WA
Environmental
Stewardship Plan

SCAP is a living document updated every 5 years.

2015 SCAP accomplishments:

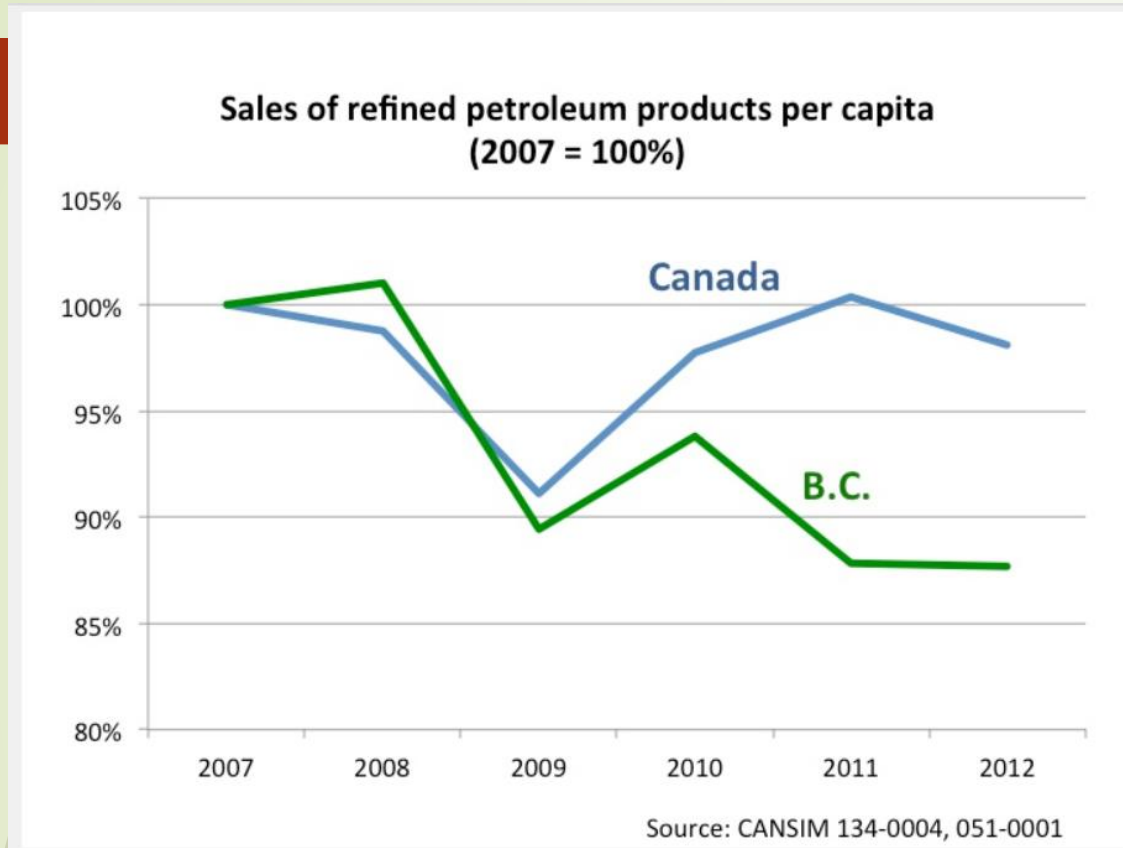
- Launched Frontline Community Climate Partnerships to support climate literacy and development in communities of color.
- Since 2010, stabilized GHG emissions and led to 11 percent per capita reduction.
- Planted 1 million trees in King County along with certified carbon credit program to protect local forests.

2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP)



Local Policy: King County Strategic Climate Action Plan

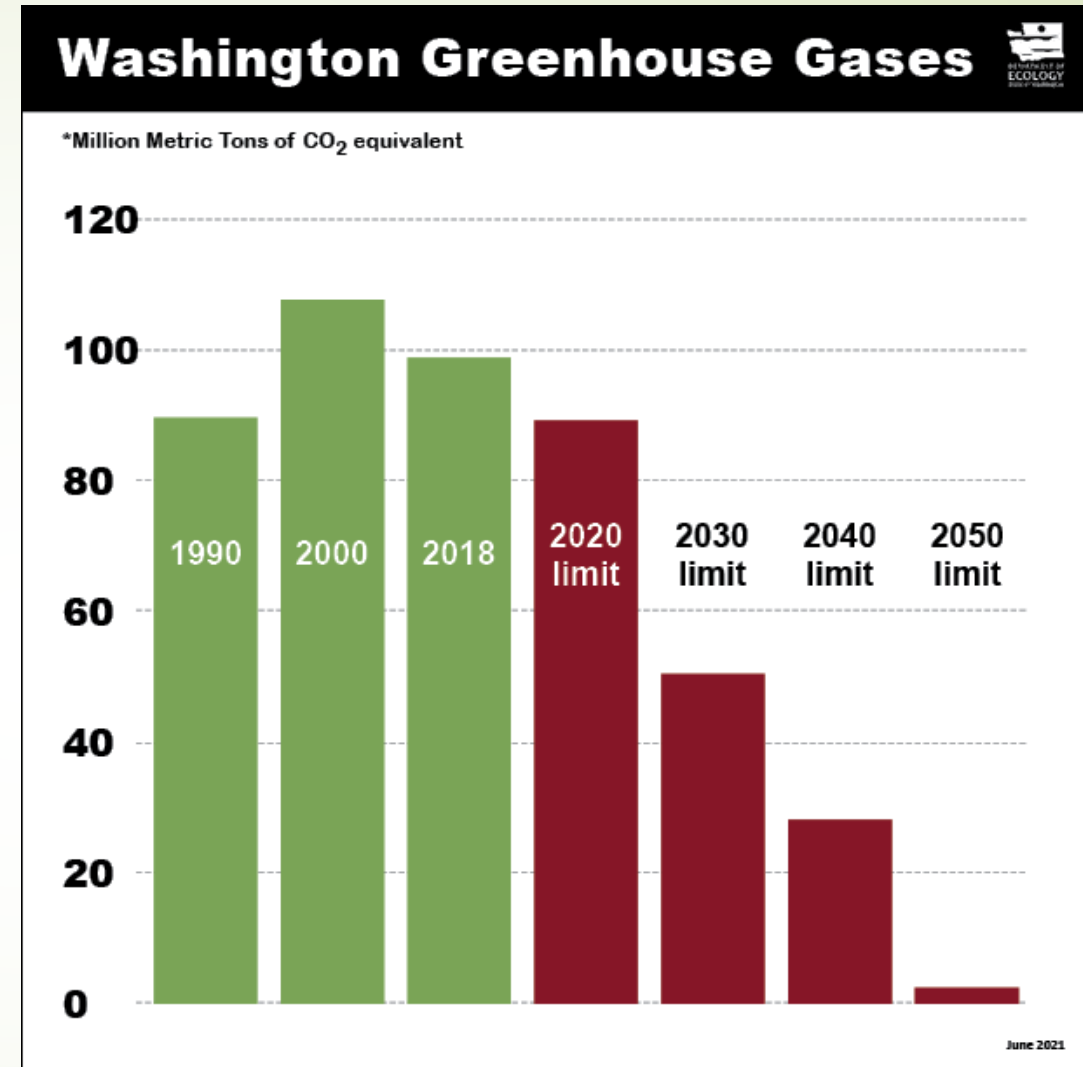
British Columbia Carbon Tax impact to 2012




- Raised \$3 billion in revenue over first 6 years in effect
- Currently set at \$45 per ton of CO₂e, will rise to \$50 per ton in 2022
- Revenues have been used to fund Green Energy initiatives and limit price impacts (Climate Action Tax Credit \$174 per adult and \$51 per child in 2020)

Regional Policy: [British Columbia Carbon Pricing \(2008\)](#) and [British Columbia's Carbon Tax \(2021\)](#)

- Passed by Washington State Legislature in 2021, signed by Governor Inslee (line item veto used to break linkage to future Transportation package and speed implementation).
- Implements Cap and Invest program that limits carbon emissions statewide beginning January 2023, and expanding over next eight years to cover 80%+ of GHG emissions.
- No sunset provision. Does not require reauthorization by state legislature.
- Linkage with California in the future: Possible but desirable?



Regional Policy: Washington State Climate Commitment Act (2021)

- 
- National Carbon Tax authorized by 2018 Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act.
 - Part of national goal to reduce Canada's GHG emissions at least 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.
 - Rebate model: Households receive 90% of the revenues.
 - Typical Canadian household will make more than they pay in higher fuel costs

National Policy: Carbon Tax in Canada and rebate system

E&ENEWS

ENVIRONMENT

National Carbon Tax Upheld by Canada's Supreme Court

The tax, now equivalent to \$24 in U.S. dollars, will rise to \$135 by 2030

By Maxine Joselow, E&E News on March 29, 2021

National Policy: Would a Carbon tax and Dividend plan work in the United States?



Carbon Fee

This policy puts a fee on fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. It starts low, and grows over time. This will drive down carbon pollution because energy companies, leading industries, and American consumers will move toward cleaner, cheaper options.



Carbon Dividend

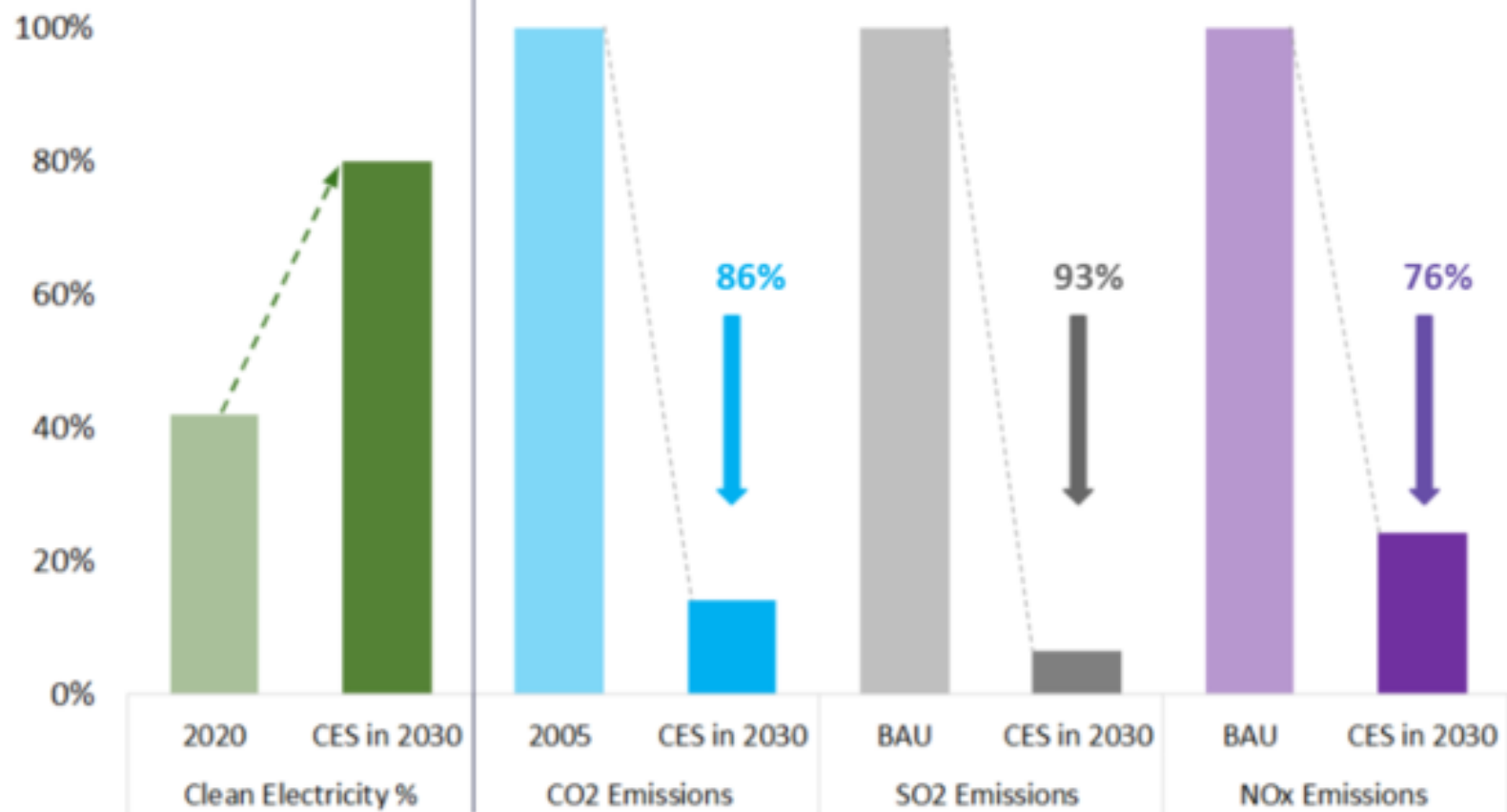
The money collected from the carbon fee is allocated in equal shares every month to the American people to spend with no restrictions. Program administrative costs are paid from the fees collected. The government does not keep any of the money from the carbon fee.



Border Carbon Adjustment

To protect U.S. manufacturers and jobs, imported goods will pay a border carbon adjustment, and goods exported from the United States will receive a refund under this policy.

National Pollution Reductions from 80% Clean by 2030



(Source: NRDC/EDF modeling with IPM)

National Policy: Will U.S. proposed Reconciliation bill include Clean Energy Payment Program and other policies?



How to get involved?



Organize to push for policy: National

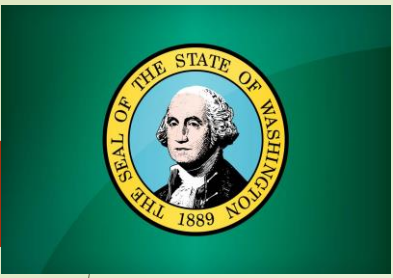
Call your National representatives: Every voice counts! Educate yourself on policies nationally and make a habit of reaching out to your elected officials regularly.

US: <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

Canada:

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en>





Organize to push for policy: State/Provincial

State/Provincial representatives are often more responsive than national officials, and the policy decisions they make can be deeply impactful.

BC: <https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members>

WA State: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder>

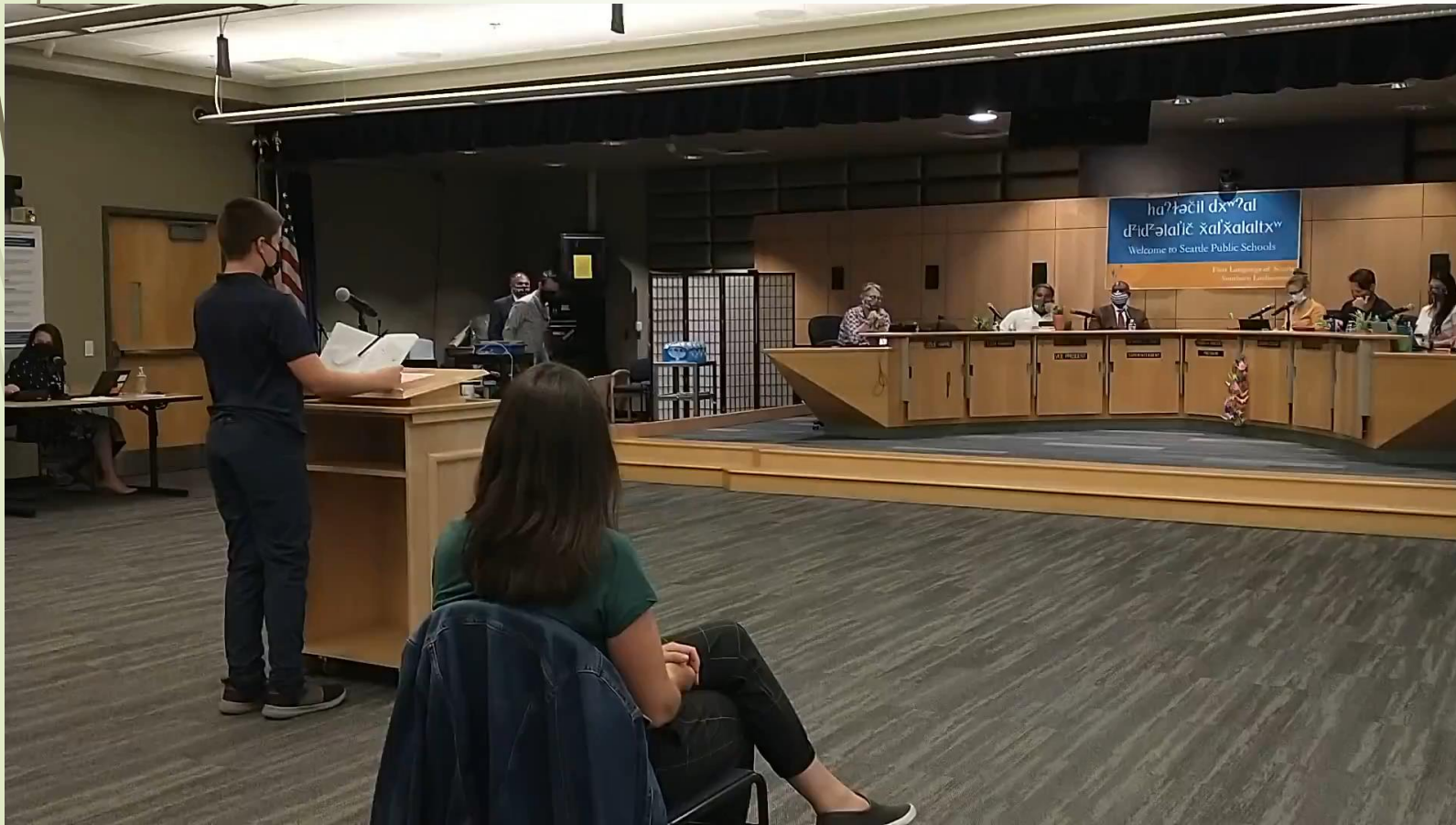


Organize to push for policy: Local

School Board, city or local council: Push for policies that accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels and focus on equity for frontline communities

Seattle Public Schools: Solar Schools and February 2022 levy to fund solutions.

← Spencer Litzenberger, age 12, testifies to SPS School Board August 2021.





Conclusion and looking ahead...

COP 26 in Glasgow: Turning point?

According to Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit:

-30,000 delegates representing 197 nations expected.

Three ingredients to a successful conference:

1. What happens in the year before COP26 to advance climate ambition;
2. How successful the official negotiations are at COP26, including the high level segment with Heads of State and Ministers from around the world;
3. What progressive coalitions and alliances emerge for action on climate change to implement the Paris agreement successfully.

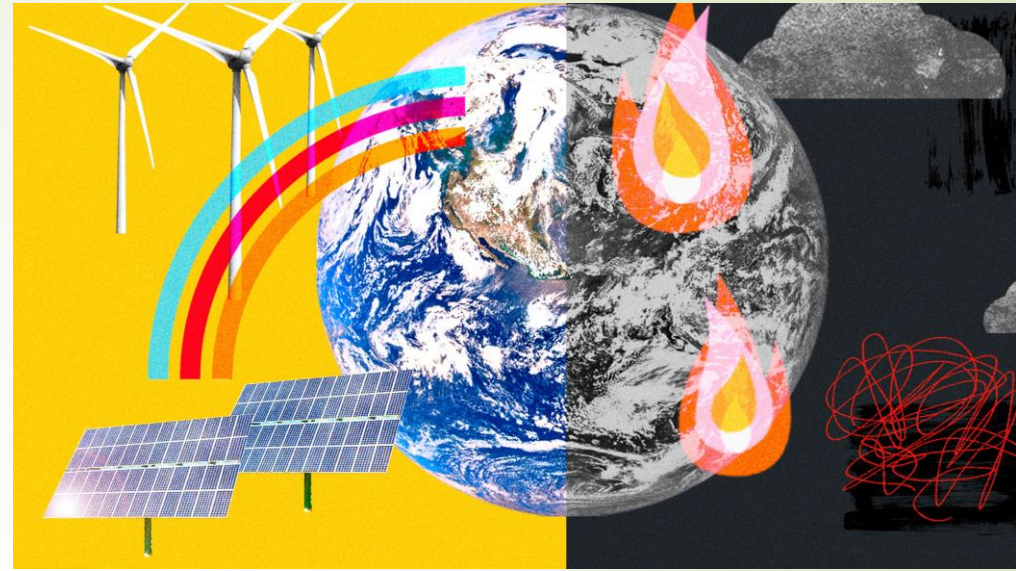


-All nations are expected to provide updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as part of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

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Additional References and Citations:

King County Climate Action Team (eds.). 2020. *King County 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan*. King County, Washington.

Gates, Bill (2021) *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need*. Penguin Books, Limited.

Brady, J. (2021, August 11). *Proposed clean energy standard could end power plant greenhouse gas emissions by 2035*. NPR. Retrieved October 10, 2021, from <https://www.npr.org/2021/08/11/1026831067/proposed-clean-energy-standard-could-end-power-plant-greenhouse-gas-emissions-by>.