

King County Executive, Ron Sims

King County Executive

Feb. 7, 2007

King County Proposes Global Warming Action Plan

Other cities, counties and private sector urged to join effort



Calling global warming the defining issue of the 21st Century, King County Executive Ron Sims today called on the region to cut greenhouse gas pollution by 80 percent below current levels by 2050, and invest in making our communities resilient to expected loss in drinking water supply, more frequent floods and other impacts.

"Communities that thrive in this new century will be the ones that take action now in response to the growing body of scientific evidence about global warming and its cause," said Sims. "The best way to protect the people, economy and environment of the

region is to take specific actions to reduce greenhouse gases and invest the money needed to adapt to less snow in the mountains and more frequent more damaging floods."

Sims laid out his response to climate change with the first King County Climate Plan. Sims called on the region's leaders to work together to create a specific timetable that incrementally reduces emissions to 80 percent below today's levels by the year 2050.

"First we must immediately stop the growth of greenhouse gases. Then we must lay out specific achievable goals for the region," said Sims. "We need to be innovative and committed to aggressively reduce emissions that are changing our climate and threatening our quality of life at every level."

"It is critically important to stabilize the climate, both in the short and long term," said Dennis McLerran, Executive Director of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency. "We need to look at what the science is showing us for guidance on what steps are needed to make a long term reduction if we want to preserve our traditional Northwest way of life. Ron's leadership on this issue, especially in an urban county, is moving us in the right direction."

"King County's plan for preparing for climate change is among the most comprehensive in the nation," said Amy Snover, with the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington. "Only a handful of leaders in this country have demonstrated the foresight and leadership to prepare their community for the local impacts of global warming. By including consideration of climate change in planning and decision making, King County will be well-placed to minimize the threats and maximize the opportunities associated with warming climate."

The world's scientists now agree that global warming is a reality and its impacts, including increasingly severe weather, are accelerating. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change this month released four major reports based on peer-reviewed scientific and technical literature that show:

- human emissions of greenhouse gases are causing global warming, as well as a cascade of other effects
- both air and water temperatures globally have shown evidence of warming and widespread changes in extreme temperatures
- continued human emissions of greenhouse gas emissions will lead to even more dramatic, and potentially catastrophic changes in Earth's climate.

The Climate Plan was created by a multi-disciplinary team of county staff under the leadership of the Executive. The plan targets the human activities that are making the global warming crisis worse, such as increasing carbon dioxide levels from vehicles, and increasing dependence on fossil fuels.

The plan calls for cleaner cars and fewer cars as the solution for reducing automobile emissions, which account for more than half the greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

The King County Global Warming Action Plan aggressively targets actions we can take right now to effect change. Among them:

- Greenhouse Gas Accountability and Limits
- Climate-Friendly Transportation Choices
- Clean Fuels, Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency
- Improved land use, building design and material usage.

Sims also encouraged public and private sector leaders to join him by setting their own climate stabilization goals in an effort to formulate a regional, multi-disciplinary approach that crosses business lines and government boundaries.

"The steps we have outlined are achievable and critically needed as we face an environment that is rapidly deteriorating due to global climate change," said Sims. "We need to use the resources and political will at our disposal to adapt our habits to respond to what the science shows works to stop climate change now, before it's too late."



Above: King County Executive Ron Sims departs for Olympia in a plug-in electric car to testify about global warming legislation.

Related information

- [2007 King County Climate Plan](#) (PDF, 1201K)
- [2007 King County Energy Plan](#) (PDF, 280K)
- [Executive Sims talking points from the press conference](#) (PDF)

In the news

- [State leaders launch attack on warming](#), Seattle Times
- [Plans to combat global warming heat up](#), Seattle Post Intelligencer
- [Gregoire signs order on climate-change goals for Washington](#), Seattle Post Intelligencer