

Questions for the Record
Mr. Reed Schuler, Senior Policy Advisor
Office of Governor Jay Inslee

September 24, 2020

Hearing: “Climate Change Part IV: Moving Towards a Sustainable Future”

1. *Since the beginning of the Trump Administration, addressing climate change has taken a back seat. However, many states and cities across the country have partnered together to try and combat the climate crisis and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Although they have been able to make significant strides, much more can be done with a strong federal partner.*
 - a. *Governor Inslee has been a leader on climate action in the State of Washington. Could you briefly describe federal regulations that could be strengthened in order to better support your efforts?*

Throughout the last four years, Trump Administration has launched a systematic assault on and through the federal regulatory process to undercut America’s ability to defeat climate change and ensure a healthy, livable future for generations to come. The federal government must start to undo the harms of the last four years by repealing or reversing each of the relevant Trump Administration rules in this area, and where necessary, Congress should pass legislation to ensure that the federal government remains the partner that states and cities need to defeat the climate crisis.

Among the federal regulations that must be addressed:

- Restore strong fuel economy (CAFE) clean car standards
- Restore President Obama’s Clean Power Plan and repeal the Trump administration’s so-called “Affordable Clean Energy” rule
- Restore and strengthen methane emissions standards
- Roll back rule gutting the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)
- Roll back efforts to expand oil and gas drilling on public lands and the National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)
- Roll back the Trump administration’s so-called “science transparency rule”

- b. *What are some key pieces of legislation that Congress should pass to better support your state’s efforts?*

Washington State believes national leadership is absolutely necessary to defeat the climate crisis. The federal government must embark on an economy-wide effort in setting ambitious, science-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals, and put in place the standards and investments needed to ensure that the United States achieves these goals sector-by-sector. Such programs should include, among many other areas:

- A national clean energy standard, requiring a pathway to decarbonizing power production across the country, drawing upon the experience of states such as Washington that have successfully created them.

- A comprehensive framework to electrify and decarbonize our transportation sector, including stronger regulatory requirements and incentives.
- A strong commitment by the federal government to investments in: a modern 21st century infrastructure system that prioritizes emission reductions and resilience and includes transit and multi-modal transportation; clean energy innovation and deployment; and clean buildings.
- Elimination of the tens of billions of dollars' worth of federal tax subsidies for fossil fuel companies, which can and should be invested into our economy instead.

We also strongly support passage of the Clean Economy Jobs and Investment Act (H.R. 4447) and efforts to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and other super pollutants.

2. *We often hear how major federal climate action would be a job-killer. But according to your testimony at the Subcommittee hearing on September 24, 2020, addressing climate change can be a job creator. Can you briefly describe how the State of Washington is creating economic growth through climate action?*

The fight against climate change is indeed a major job creator in Washington State and throughout the country. Nationally, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, two of the three the rapidly growing job fields are solar panel installers and wind turbine technicians. In 2013, Washington State established a Clean Energy Fund (CEF) when Governor Inslee took office that invested public funds to leverage private investment in projects that would create jobs while also reducing GHG emissions. The first two cycles of funding alone drew \$2.47 for every \$1 invested by the state. In total, as of last year, over \$150 million has been invested by Washington State — creating hundreds of jobs, expanding energy efficiency and affordability, and spurring innovation. Washington State's experience with the CEF is a model for the country. Additional policies, like our Clean Energy Transformation Act, not only put us on a pathway to greater investments in clean technologies, but strongly incentivize high-quality, family wage jobs.

3. *We've seen sweeping, regressive actions taken by the Trump Administration over the past four years, including the rollback of the Obama-era clean car standards, which experts have found would be costly for consumers, which is a step in the wrong direction. Is there a specific federal regulation that the current administration has either rolled back or weakened that you think most needs to be reinstated or strengthened in order to drive economic growth and job creation?*

Highlighted above are many of the Trump administration's profoundly damaging regulatory rollbacks on climate, all of which must be reinstated and strengthened. I would emphasize here the attack on vehicle efficiency standards, which are among the worst from an economic perspective — these standards have driven enormous technological improvements, saved consumers billions of dollars, and have supported a globally competitive industry. Now, at precisely the moment when we must be accelerating our efforts and innovating to build a zero-emission future, the administration is seeking to undo progress, permit more pollution and stagnate technological growth. Economic progress lies in looking forward, not backward.