

Inslee will push ideas to fight climate change

Spokesman Review (Spokane, WA)

December 17, 2020 Thursday

MAIN Edition

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Section: C; Pg. 001

Length: 567 words

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Body

OLYMPIA - Gov. Jay Inslee and legislative Democrats will renew a push for more state efforts to combat pollution and **climate change** with a series of initiatives in next year's legislative session.

Some of the measures have a familiar ring. They will push for a "clean fuel standard" to require the use of fuels with less pollution to be used in the state, and state charges on the carbon pollution businesses in certain industries will be allowed to emit. Both have been unsuccessful in previous sessions.

The plan also includes more electric hybrid ferries to reduce the amount of diesel burned by vessels in the state system, investments in clean energy and clean building standards, and a new "environmental justice analysis" for projects to direct more money toward communities that have traditionally borne the brunt of pollution.

"COVID-19 is not the only threat to our state that we have to face," Inslee said in introducing the ideas at a Tuesday news conference. "We have the tools to defeat **climate change**, and we will."

Under the proposals, the state would reduce the amount of carbon pollution going into the atmosphere over the next 10 years from about 84 million metric tons to 54 million metric tons. The largest source of that pollution is fuel burned for transportation.

Inslee wants Washington to adopt a clean fuel standard similar to California, Oregon and British Columbia, which would require petroleum companies to produce more low-carbon fuel. Washington refineries already produce fuel that meets the standard, but most of it is shipped to other states, said Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon, D-Burien, who has pushed for the standard in the past.

Inslee said the standard would have "negligible" impacts on gas prices, although studies in the past from opponents have consistently disagreed. Republicans last year called it "a gas tax with no roads" because, unlike other fuel taxes, it would not be used for transportation projects.

Ferry boats are among the top users of diesel in the state. The state is already converting one ferry to electricity and building a new electric hybrid ferry boat; Inslee wants to spend \$318 million over the next four years to build another new electric hybrid ferry, convert an existing diesel ferry to electric and build three more charging stations.

Certain industries would also pay a fee, called an allowance, for the amount of carbon they can emit, and the money raised would be to pay for clean energy projects. Details on the industries targeted would be released in the coming weeks.

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A separate Healthy Homes and Clean Buildings proposal would invest in weatherizing homes for low-income families and making them more energy efficient, retrofitting 200 existing public buildings and building new high-efficiency, all electric structures.

The bills will be introduced in the 2021 session, which starts in four weeks. Inslee said that while the partisan split in the Legislature remains the same as the last session when some of these ideas faltered, he believes the effects of **climate change** are becoming more apparent and new legislators have been elected by campaigning on the need to address it.

Sen. Reuven Carlyle, a Seattle Democrat and longtime proponent of stricter environmental legislation, said passing the package would be "an absolute, unequivocal priority" for Senate Democrats.

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Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: POLLUTION & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (94%); AIR POLLUTION (90%); **CLIMATE CHANGE** (90%); CLIMATOLOGY (89%); ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT (89%); US DEMOCRATIC PARTY (89%); ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (78%); ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (78%); PARTISANSHIP (78%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2020 (78%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (78%); BUILDING & HOUSING CODES (77%); ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION (77%); FUEL TAX (77%); OIL & GAS PRICES (77%); ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES (73%); INFECTIOUS DISEASE (68%); FAMILY (65%); COVID CORONAVIRUS (53%); COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS (53%); LOW INCOME PERSONS (50%)

Industry: ALTERNATIVE & RENEWABLE ENERGY (89%); ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT (89%); ENERGY & UTILITIES (89%); FERRIES (89%); ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (78%); BUILDING & HOUSING CODES (77%); ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION (77%); FUEL TAX (77%); OIL & GAS INDUSTRY (77%); OIL & GAS PRICES (77%); PETROLEUM & COAL PRODUCTS MFG (77%); ELECTRIC POWER PLANTS (75%); TRANSPORTATION PLANNING (75%); TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE (74%); PETROLEUM PRODUCTS (69%)

Person: JAY INSLEE (79%)

Geographic: SPOKANE, WA, USA (88%); WASHINGTON, USA (93%); CALIFORNIA, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (92%)

Load-Date: December 17, 2020