

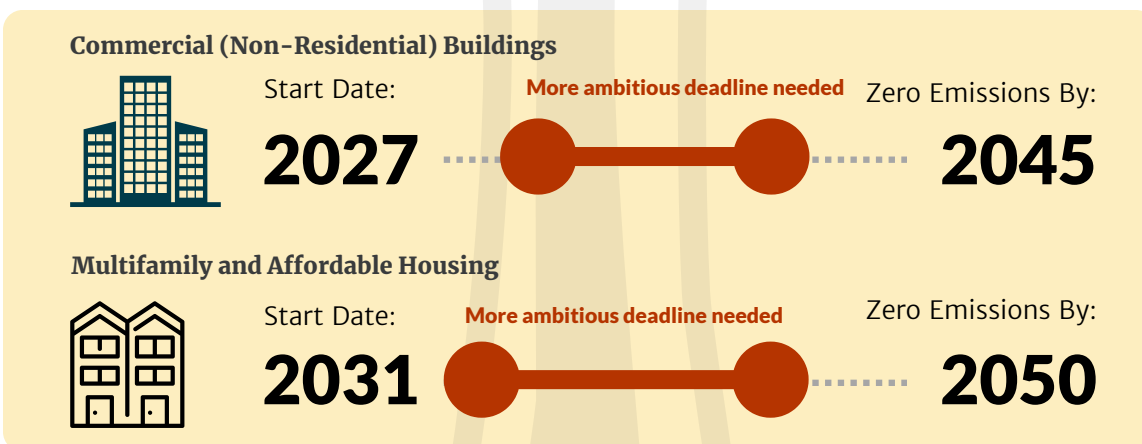
In Seattle, commercial and multifamily buildings account for 37% of our city's climate pollution. Fossil fuels used for space and water are responsible for 98% of emissions from existing commercial buildings. The city must rapidly transition these buildings to clean, renewable electricity to meet climate goals and protect public health and safety.

- Seattle's 2018 Climate Action Strategy calls for a 40% emissions reduction by 2030, and the 2019 Green New Deal Resolution calls for a complete transition off of climate-polluting fuels by 2030.
- Beyond just carbon emissions, burning methane gas in buildings also emits dangerous air pollutants like nitrogen oxide (NOx) and particulate matter (PM2.5) leading to dozens of early deaths and hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of annual health impacts in Washington, disproportionately impacting people of color.
- While recent changes to the state energy codes and market trends have almost completely halted the construction of new buildings that use gas for space and water heating, existing buildings continue to pose a significant barrier to reaching net zero-emissions.

Building Emissions Performance Standard:

A new effort for existing buildings

The City of Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) is developing a building emissions performance standard (BEPS) policy to transition existing commercial buildings and large multifamily buildings (>20,000 sq ft.) to zero-emissions over the coming decades.



This timeline is far too slow for the City to reach its stated goals of 40% emissions reduction by 2030.

Additionally, the currently proposed policy contains loopholes for "greenwashed" alternatives and nominal penalties that do not encourage compliance or accountability.

Our growing coalition consists of and is supported by environmental justice groups, organized labor, community-based grassroots organizations, and affordable housing advocates. We are calling for the following policy changes to hold polluters accountable and to provide life-saving cooling needed as we continue to deal with the increasingly disastrous effects of climate change.

More Ambitious Timelines

In order to meet the goals established in the 2019 Seattle Green New Deal resolution, which calls for a complete transition off of fossil fuels on all city buildings by 2035. This puts Seattle far behind the 2030 deadline that global scientists agree is our best chance to keep global warming from exceeding 1.5°C and leaves millions of dollars of federal subsidies from the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act on the table.

Hold Big Polluters Accountable.

Penalties for these buildings must be large enough and frequent enough to deter continued pollution and increasing each subsequent year. Climate justice demands that loopholes and alternative payments for big commercial buildings must be eliminated.

Supporting the Clean Buildings Opportunity Account to Invest in Life-Saving Cooling.

We support the allocation of revenue from fines, penalties, and alternative compliance payments to the Clean Buildings Opportunity Account to support affordable, equitable decarbonization for highly impacted communities, affordable housing, and low- and moderate-income (LMI) tenants. Electric appliances, like heat pumps, can increase climate resiliency as heat waves intensify in Washington, by providing cooling so people can close the window to keep out wildfire smoke. As of 2022, only 53% of Washingtonians have air conditioning, meaning many will benefit from installing an electric heat pump.

“Renewable” Natural Gas and “Green” Hydrogen are False Solutions.

RNG and hydrogen pollute the air, our climate and puts our safety at risk with highly-flammable pipelines running through our neighborhoods. Washington’s 2021 State Energy Strategy determined that electrification and energy efficiency measures are the cheapest and safest pathway to meeting our climate targets.

Legislative timeline:

