

## **WWU Environmental Lobby Agenda 2018**

*Environmental equity, public health safety, environmental justice, and environmental responsibility*

### **Carbon Taxation**

- Vote **YES** on bill 5509
- Western students stand in firm affirmation of reducing carbon emissions in ways that mitigate negative externalities that continuously get disproportionately placed on lower socio economic group and non-white identities
- A comprehensive approach to carbon pricing that considers more than just the economy is necessary to create just environmental practices

Carbon pricing and carbon taxes have been accredited for emission reduction by policy makers, climate scientists, as well as economists, making them one of the most effective tools to reduce emissions from large emitters. Carbon taxes encourages movement towards greener energy sources effecting the job market in green industries and benefitting the environment.

Washington State needs a carbon tax structured as Bill 5509 is in order to address environmental concerns, and the equity concerns that come with carbon pricing tools. The proposed bill has a structure that does not have tax implementation in communities where there are a high volume of people living near the poverty line, and further the profits attained from the carbon tax are to be invested in clean energy, air, and healthy forests through the department of revenue. Additionally, the department of revenue is to take revenues from this tax to help lower income individuals and workers who are negatively impacted by the energy transition to lower emissions. Similar legislation passed in Vancouver B.C. has proved to be effective in lowering emissions and aiding those directly and disproportionately affected by carbon pricing tools. This bill addresses all facets of the complex issue of carbon pricing, and are necessary in creating a greener and more just environment.

### **Environmental equity and public health safety (Model Toxics Control Act Funding)**

- Allocate funds to help make up for a shortage of funds
- Secure a more stable source of funding for MTCA
- Western students stand in firm affirmation of the services MTCA provides seeing as they have continued to address hazardous site concerns, support communities going through cleanup, and have worked towards creating justice and need based waste evaluation systems

The Model Toxics Control Act originally passed in order to identify where revenue from taxes on hazardous substances get directed. MTCA has been incredibly successful in identifying and cleaning up hazardous sites, as well as been dedicated to protecting water quality and supporting local communities as they address hazardous waste threats. A detailed report done by Front and Centered concluded that half of all toxic sites in WA are located in areas that are

disproportionately non-white and/or low income, only 5% of grants from Public Participation Grants were prioritizing environmental justice concerns, and that MTCA has positively impacted vulnerable communities at risk of hazardous waste threats

MTCA relies on a tax that is imposed on hazardous substances that have extremely volatile prices making its revenue extremely unreliable. We encourage legislators to impose a tax surcharge to ensure that funding is more stable and predictable for coming years as well as help solve shortfalls in funding in order to continue the positive progress MTCA has made in protecting vulnerable communities.

**Public Health and Environmental Justice: House bill 1171**

- Vote **YES** on bill 1171
- Western students are in firm affirmation of creating a safe and healthy environment for all to live in

Ultrafine particulate emissions, often associated with aircraft traffic in areas impacted by airport operations, have often been associated with heart and lung conditions, asthma, blocked arteries, and other health issues. Additionally, the environmental protection agency currently recognizes UMP's as a respiratory health risk, and recent studies have found that air pollution levels and income levels are linked. This is especially true for SEATAC airport where the poverty rate is 20.5%, 10% above the national average. Ultimately this means that lower income folks are being directly threatened by the presence of UMP's in their living area, the completion of an environmental impact study would likely drive legislators to find some sort of solution to these issues.

Washington State must move to approve house bill 1711 that would conduct a study around the concentrations of UMP presence around SEATAC airport, find out how much of the UMP's are coming from aircrafts, as well as study whether or not the airport is the main culprit through studying other similar sites. Further, this bill partners with the department of commerce to assess if low income residents, communities of color, and 27 other communities are being disproportionately impacted. From there they will make recommendations to legislators considering their findings. The passage of this bill would work to solve environmental issues that have negative externalities which are unfairly being distributed onto communities of color and lower socio-economic groups. Continuing to make strides in mitigating environmental externalities is imperative to having just, safe, and, environmentally friendly practices.