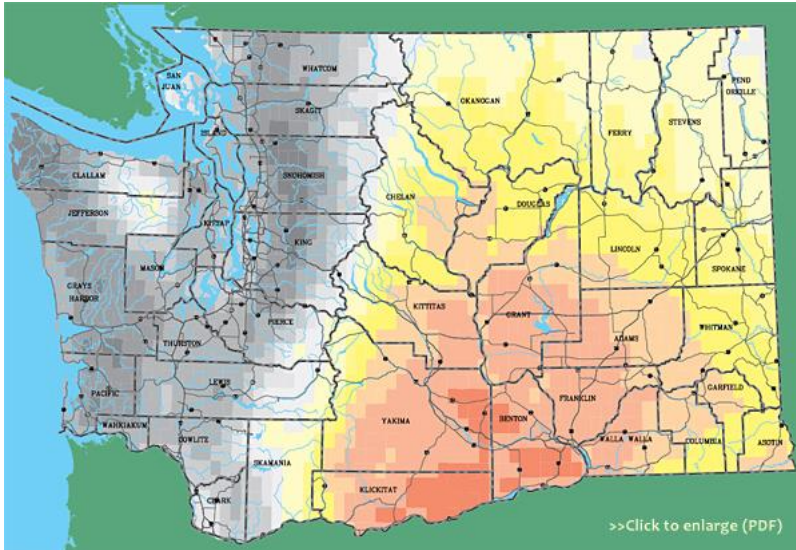


Impacts, Preparation, Adaptation



Due to increased concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) already accumulated in the atmosphere, Washington will face certain impacts to our forests, agriculture, snowpack, rivers, coastal waters and other natural resources that we so value. The extent and duration of these impacts will largely be determined by our collective success in reducing future emissions of GHGs. However, the Washington State Department of Ecology, along with other state agencies, has already started planning for the unavoidable consequences of a changing climate.

Many of these challenges we will face are similar to those we've been wrestling with for decades — water supply and quality, ecosystem health, air quality, shoreline and habitat protection and restoration. But the rate and severity of the changes we are likely to witness in the coming years will be unlike anything Washingtonians have ever experienced.

State agencies will continue to work in partnership with local communities to develop a statewide strategy for responding to the anticipated impacts of a changing climate. Check this website often for updated technical and scientific information about the impacts of climate change on Washington's communities and natural resources.

A useful definition of “regional climate change” can be found in the [federal climate and energy bill](#) that recently passed out of the U.S. House of Representatives. They define regional climate change as,

“...the natural or human-induced changes manifested in the local or regional environment (including alterations in weather patterns, land productivity, water resources, sea level rise, atmospheric chemistry, biodiversity, and ecological systems) that may alter the capacity of a specific region to support current or future social and economic activity or natural ecosystems.”

It will be these issues, as observed and experienced here in Washington State, which will be the focus of the information provided on this webpage.

Development of a Washington State Climate Change Impacts Response Strategy

Steering Committee Members

Spencer Reeder, Department of Ecology (Chair)

Nancy Boyd, Department of Transportation

Kirk Cook, Department of Agriculture

Anna Jackson, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Rachael Jamison, Department of Natural Resources

Joyce Phillips, Department of Commerce

This past spring, Governor Gregoire signed legislation (E2SSB 5560) that included provisions for the formation of an “integrated climate change response strategy” that would “better enable state and local agencies, public and private businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to prepare for, address, and adapt to the impacts of climate change.”

These provisions are outlined in sections 10 through 12 of the bill. View the [full copy of the signed legislation](#)

The legislation directs Ecology, in partnership with the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, and Transportation to develop an initial state strategy by December of 2011.

These six state agencies, along with other representatives from across state government, are currently developing a draft strategy outline and the details of a stakeholder process that will ensure we take advantage of the existing expertise in the region. Local Governments, who will be faced with many of the front-line challenges in dealing with these impacts, will be closely

consulted in the development of the strategy.

A [timeline](#) has now been created for the process of developing the state strategy and the formation of Topic Advisory Groups (TAGs) that will allow for broad stakeholder participation. Public outreach will also be an important component of the strategy development.