



NEWS RELEASE

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Snohomish County Councilmember's address climate change

Amidst increasing recognition of the dangers surrounding climate change Snohomish County Councilmember's Dave Gossett, Dave Somers and Kirke Sievers sent a memo to County Executive Aaron Reardon today directing his office to work collaboratively with Council staff to compare the difference in the amount of energy consumption in county buildings as well as the level of greenhouse gases produced by the county vehicle fleet from 1996 to 2005.

In 1996, Snohomish County entered into a contract with Honeywell Inc to reduce energy consumption in county buildings located on the main campus by 2005. The end result was a 62% reduction in electricity consumption and \$3.2 million in cost savings. The Councilmember's have requested an analysis of options to further increase energy efficiency in county facilities and to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions from the county's vehicle fleet and facilities.

Councilmember's believe the initial efforts should focus on the efficacy of past energy initiatives and analyze the effectiveness of future options for addressing energy consumption and reduction of carbon emissions. This first step will assist in the implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan.

"We realize that Snohomish County's efforts alone may seem like a drop in the bucket, but it's essential that every jurisdiction do their part – we all must be part of the solution", said Council Chair Dave Gossett.

According to recently released statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, Snohomish County is the 15th fastest growing county in the United States. Under the State of Washington's Growth Management Act, Snohomish County must plan for an additional 300,000 residents in the next 20 years.

"It's no secret that our county is growing rapidly. It's important that we look at how to promote innovative solutions such as energy conservation and increasing the availability of biodiesel and alternative energy to help lessen our region's impact on the problem. I'm pleased that we are taking a proactive approach", said Council Vice-Chair Dave Somers.

The memo from the council to executive requests the joint report specifically address the following:

- impact of streamlining the regulations for urban villages and centers;
- strategies that are or could be taken to encourage transit in development design and to increase transit options in general;
- practical measures to preserve and/or replace vegetative cover;
- steps the county can take to promote broader use and availability of biodiesel;
- strategies the county is currently or could implement to promote the preservation of farm land;
- impact of increased recycling on greenhouse gas production;
- ways to promote the use of environmentally friendly construction materials such as porous concrete, blast-furnace slag cement, etc.;
- programs to provide walkways and bikeways in areas currently without such amenities (including the impact of the ECIDI and RTID projects);
- options to increase traffic flow efficiency and reduce idling.

Councilmember Kirke Sievers said, “It’s clear to me that climate change is an issue we all need to be concerned about and it’s imperative that government at all levels lead by example.”

The Council has requested that a briefing be provided during its’ April 23rd Administrative Session at 10:30am (8th floor, E Admin Bldg) meeting to coincide with National County Government Week (April 22-28); the theme this year is “Protecting the Environment.”