

Environmental Priorities Coalition

American Rivers ♦ Audubon Washington ♦ Cascade Bicycle Club ♦ Climate Solutions ♦ Conservation Northwest
Earth Ministry ♦ Environment Washington ♦ Fuse ♦ Futurewise ♦ Heart of America Northwest ♦ The Lands Council
League of Women Voters of Washington ♦ Lutheran Public Policy Office ♦ National Wildlife Federation ♦ The Nature Conservancy
NW Energy Coalition ♦ People for Puget Sound ♦ Sierra Club Cascade Chapter ♦ Surfrider Foundation
Transportation Choices Coalition ♦ Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation ♦ Washington Conservation Voters
Washington Environmental Council ♦ Washington Toxics Coalition ♦ Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition
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2010 Priority: Sustain Environmental Protections in the Budget

Critical Programs List

The proposed 2010 supplemental budget threatens core environmental protection programs that ensure clean drinking water, unpolluted air, and clean up of toxic contamination. Last year, budget cuts to natural resource agencies were more severe than in other areas of the state's General Fund Budget. Significant further reductions to selected core programs and the transfer of dedicated funds will eliminate the agencies' ability to deliver on their basic functions, as required by federal and state law. We urge the Legislature to preserve critical programs that were reduced in the Governor's supplemental budget.

Below is the list of priority budget programs we urge the Legislature to preserve:

Toxic Contamination

There are almost 10,000 sites in Washington state contaminated with toxic chemicals, heavy metals, oil, gasoline and other pollutants. We rely on the state to clean up these toxic sites and protect our health and safety. Last year, \$180 million was swept from the dedicated toxic cleanup fund and this year another \$81 million was transferred to the General Fund. In light of this, the additional cuts to program functions will prevent sorely needed toxic cleanups from getting underway throughout the state. In addition, other cuts will slow cleanups on sites statewide and will mean less vital information getting to communities about toxic threats in their backyard.

We ask you to preserve funding for the following supplemental budget line items:

- Preserve Hazardous Waste Cleanup, Department of Ecology: \$500,000
- Preserve Solid Waste Cleanup, Department of Ecology: \$273,000
- Preserve Toxic Cleanup, Department of Ecology: \$2,900,000

Air Quality

The Air Quality Program is an essential investment in public health for Washingtonians. Cuts to this program mean our state will have decreased ability to monitor and reduce the toxic pollution in our air, which causes asthma, lung disease, heart disease and cancer. In addition, a program to prevent diesel air pollution in Eastern Washington will end, which means area residents will have continued exposure to toxic soot, causing asthma and other lung diseases. This program is also an essential part of Washington's efforts to combat global warming pollution and develop a clean energy economy to help create thousands of new jobs.

We ask you to preserve funding for the following supplemental budget line item:

- Preserve Air Quality Activities, Department of Ecology: \$300,000

Water Quality

The Water Quality Program prevents and cleans up water pollution. Further cuts to an already decimated program put at risk our state's ability to limit pollution, our ability to meet the minimum requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act, and our commitment to restore the health of Puget Sound. Other cuts reduce our state's ability to ensure our beaches and waterways are not contaminated by sewage, thus threatening the health and safety of our beaches.

We ask you to preserve funding to the following supplemental budget line items:

- Preserve Water Quality Cleanups, Department of Ecology: \$204,000
- Preserve Water Quality Monitoring, Department of Ecology: \$200,000
- Preserve Environmental Health Programs, Department of Health: \$500,000

Water Resources

Washington state is grappling with a growing water supply crisis – in some areas we don't have enough water to meet increasing demands, streams run dry, and we lack basic information on water use and availability. Moreover, climate change impacts increase uncertainty about our future water supply. The cuts will weaken critical environmental functions including managing information on water use and flows, setting minimum in-stream flows, updating water rights through adjudication, and promoting efficiency to prevent wasteful water use.

We ask you to preserve funding for the following supplemental budget line items:

- Preserve Shorelands Water Supply Activities, Department of Ecology: \$354,000
- Preserve Local Watershed Planning Assistance, Department of Ecology: \$5,309,000
- Preserve Water Resources activities, Department of Ecology: \$1,044,000

Habitat Protection

Basic science and monitoring for our salmon and more than 200 other threatened species are reduced in the budget and some programs will be effectively eliminated. For example, the Natural Heritage Program provides the basic science and information resources that our state needs to protect rare plants, animals, and ecosystems. These efforts are well underway – eliminating funding at this critical time will set back recovery efforts for years to come.

We ask you to preserve funding for the following supplemental budget line items:

- Preserve Natural Heritage Program, Department of Natural Resource: \$318,000
- Preserve wildlife disease monitoring and scientific assistance for salmon recovery, Department of Fish and Wildlife: \$370,000

- Preserve salmon recovery data coordination and Biodiversity Council, Recreation and Conservation Office Funding Board: \$160,000
- Preserve the Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan: \$ 1,000,000

Transportation:

Nearly 50 percent of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector; reducing these emissions and increasing access to transit are crucial to meeting the state’s climate change goals. Cuts to the GTEC program directly result in more drive-alone trips in our most congested urban areas, clogging our roads and increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, at a time when transit ridership continues to be strong, local transit agencies across the state are on the verge of falling off a financial cliff and are looking at 15-25 percent cuts over the next two years. If new local options and state contributions to transit are not identified, Washington residents will be left without transportation choices, which will have a direct impact on increased emissions in the transportation sector.

We ask you to preserve funding for the following supplemental budget line item:

- Preserve GTEC to its original \$3 million dollar level for the rest of the biennium.

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