A New Path Forward: Action Plan for a Sustainable Washington

Achieving Long-term Economic, Social, and Environmental Vitality

Submitted to Governor Gary Locke
February, 2003
Governor's Sustainable Washington Advisory Panel

Dear Governor,

Five months ago, you charged this Panel with developing an action plan to move us onto a path towards a sustainable Washington. That plan is now complete, and we present it to you here. It is designed to ensure a rich quality of life for both current and future generations of Washingtonians. We share your commitment to sustainability in our magnificent state, and pledge to join with you in taking the next practical steps to make this plan a reality.

Through our deliberations, we have come to better understand that sustainability is more a means than an end. It is about extending the human species' stay on the earth and improving the quality of that existence. As a framework for responsible decision-making, it promotes a long-term perspective. It illuminates the interactions of our human and natural systems so we can fully consider the impacts made as we simultaneously pursue economic vitality, social equity, and ecological stewardship. Basically, sustainability is the application of the golden rule *from generation to generation*.

The facts clearly show that we must start changing our behavior now if we expect Washington's quality of life to improve, not diminish, over the next thirty years. In places where governments, communities, and businesses have begun this journey toward a sustainable future, new industries and technologies have emerged and communities have turned the corner on prosperity, habitat restoration, and the healing of troubled urban centers. We have witnessed the momentum that springs from an inspiring vision and courageous leadership. The Panel is convinced that through statewide determination and commitment, together we *can* achieve a sustainable future for Washington.

Our report is organized into four sections. We begin with a *Vision*:

"to achieve a fully sustainable Washington within one generation."

After a sobering look at *Today's Reality*, we suggest that with our natural, financial, and human resources, Washington can—and should—become a leader in sustainable practices.

To that end, the *Essential Strategic Outcomes* describe the tapestry of what a sustainable Washington will look like in a generation. The *Priority Action Recommendations* that follow are the immediate first steps. We view them as both essential and politically feasible, even under today's constraints.

Our journey has just begun. While we have accomplished much in a short time, there is still much to do. We ask that you endorse our efforts by extending the charter of this Panel for one year. We are enthusiastic about helping Washington along the path of sustainability because this is the challenge of a lifetime.

*Organizational listing for identification purposes only.

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We propose that the Panel:

- Shepherd the *Priority Action Recommendations* toward implementation;
- Take leadership in the development of a sustainable innovation institute;
- Begin development of a unified state-wide set of sustainability metrics and indicators;
- Help our respective organizations become leaders in this effort; and
- Actively participate, under your auspices, with other state advisory commissions and councils, in particular the Economic Development Council.

In this plan we address solutions to current problems and speak to the shared hope of sustaining the quality of life that is special to the Northwest. We suggest nothing other than the most effective means to ensure vibrant communities, a strong and stable economy, and the protection and restoration of our natural resources.

This Panel is committed to working collaboratively to pioneer these efforts. We urge your leadership in helping shape a sustainable Washington. There is no greater legacy to leave our children and the future generations of our state.

Sincerely,

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Executive Summary

Governor Gary Locke convened the Sustainable Washington Advisory Panel in September 2002 because of the widening gap between our state's current reality and a Washington that is equitable, healthy, and prospering. The Panel concluded that it is imperative to initiate significant changes now if we want Washington's quality of life to improve, not diminish, over the next generation.

Following a sustainable path to the future has the potential to protect our natural wealth, strengthen our social fabric, revitalize our communities, and place our economy on a firm and enduring foundation. To move forward, the Panel defined eight Essential Strategic Outcomes as goals for 2030 and eleven Priority Action Recommendations for immediate implementation.

Vision

"By 2030, Washington will embrace a new path forward in which our communities and the economy are steadily thriving and nature is no longer in peril. Our actions will ensure that following generations can flourish and bequeath to their children a place where they too can experience a rich and fulfilling life."

Essential Strategic Outcomes for 2030

The year 2030 is a benchmark date chosen to identify both the enormity of the change required and the time it may take to achieve substantial progress. The Essential Strategic Outcomes describe our state a generation from now, as we build a truly sustainable future for our children and grandchildren.

1. **Reliance on Renewable Energy:** Energy efficiency and conservation will be dramatically increased; virtually all of our energy needs will be met through renewable sources.

2. **Engaged Communities:** Citizens will be vested with regional and local responsibility, authority, and accountability to care for the resources essential to economic, environmental, and social well-being.

3. **No Waste:** Waste will be used as resources for new goods or reabsorbed into natural systems. Toxic materials will be eliminated.

4. **Costs Paid in Full:** Taxes, regulations, and incentives will be revised to reflect wise natural and social resource policy.

5. **Educated Public:** Equal access and opportunity, lifelong learning, and public media will provide the foundation for an involved, well-informed public.

6. **Economic Vitality Through Natural Resource Innovation:** Our industrial processes, transportation systems, and infrastructure will be transformed through radical improvements in resource productivity.

7. **Social Justice:** Vibrant institutions and engaged communities will protect the most vulnerable members of society and hold all accountable to civic norms.

8. **Enduring Natural Resources:** We will understand and live within our regional carrying capacity while maintaining biodiversity.

Priority Action Recommendations

Pursuing this new path forward requires both long-term changes and immediate action. These eleven recommendations are directly linked to the longer-term strategic outcomes, build on the momentum of existing initiatives, contribute to economic development, tackle critical resource issues, use the power of government to drive change, and build public awareness so that progress can occur more quickly.

Increase Economic Vitality

1. **Invest in clean energy as a major economic development opportunity** for Washington State through adopting and implementing a Clean Energy Business Development Strategy and establishing clean energy standards for energy production.

2. **Create an Institute for Innovation and Sustainable Development**, to serve as the focal point for research, design, and investment in sustainable technologies, processes, and social system solutions.

Take Action on Critical Resource Issues

3. **Commit to greenhouse gas reduction targets and mitigation strategies** as the basis for developing a low-carbon, high-performance economy.

4. **Sustain Washington's natural resources** through collaborative planning, monitoring, protection and restoration programs, new investments, and market-based initiatives.

Lead by Example

5. **Adopt industry-sponsored "green building" standards for all new state government construction projects.**

6. **Establish goals for state government procurement of sustainable goods and services.**

7. **Align the state's capital spending decisions with policies that encourage efficient development.**

Provide Incentives

8. **Begin to shift the tax burden to promote sustainable outcomes and raise needed revenues** by increasing selected user fees and pollution taxes and then lowering taxes on enterprise and citizens.

9. **Provide local governments with the autonomy to implement innovative approaches to achieving sustainable outcomes.**

Build Awareness and Measure Progress

10. **Engage and inform citizens and stakeholders about sustainability** through a series of forums and by widely disseminating this Action Plan.

11. **Define, document, and communicate progress toward the vision of a sustainable Washington** through producing a set of sustainability performance measures.

Our Vision

To achieve a fully sustainable Washington in one generation

By 2030, Washington will embrace a new path forward in which our communities and the economy are steadily thriving and nature is no longer in peril. Our actions will ensure that following generations can flourish and bequeath to their children a place where they too can experience a rich and fulfilling life.

Preliminary Path Finding

Governor Gary Locke convened the Sustainable Washington Advisory Panel in September 2002 because of the widening gap between our state's current reality and a Washington that is equitable, healthy, and prospering. Over the course of our research, discussions, reviews, meetings with experts, and examination of the data, we have been struck by both the complexity and urgency of the challenges and the vastness of the opportunities ahead.

Our preliminary findings highlight the imperative of initiating significant changes now if we want Washington's quality of life to improve, not diminish, over the next generation. There are meaningful and attainable goals for every level of government, every enterprise and institution and organization, and every citizen of our state in helping forge a new path forward.

We firmly believe that following a sustainable path to the future has the potential to protect our natural wealth, strengthen our social fabric, revitalize our communities, and place our economy on a firm and enduring foundation.

This report outlines our journey, from a brief survey of the multi-layered problems we currently face, to the long-range strategies and goals we view as attainable by 2030, to some of the practical first steps along the new path forward.

This work is the challenge of a lifetime because it is the legacy we wish to leave our children, grandchildren, and all future generations of our state.

"We are at that very point in time when a 400-year-old age is dying and another is struggling to be born—a shifting of culture, science, society, and institutions enormously greater than the world has ever experienced. Ahead, the possibility of regeneration of individuality, liberty, community and ethics such as the world has never known, and a harmony with nature, with one another and with the divine intelligence such as the world has always dreamed."

—Dee Hock,
founder and CEO Emeritus of VISA International

"Sustainability is the application of the golden rule from generation to generation."

Today's Reality

We live in an era of unparalleled consumption and growth, yet our progress is coming at the expense of the earth's diverse human communities and natural resources. The challenge of extending an equitable, high quality of life to our own as well as to the world's growing numbers of people remains unmet. Meanwhile, disappearing species, eroding soils, vanishing forests, and changing climate are among the signs that we must transform our way of living so that we can continue to prosper while remaining within nature's limits.

Washington has the potential to reconcile human aspirations with emerging ecological imperatives by fostering a sustainable society.

Unfortunately, current trends are not moving us in this direction. Many of our actions designed to create and maintain a successful economy have had unintended consequences. A growing body of data indicates that continuing along this path will increasingly threaten our health, diminish the quality of life we seek to maintain, and ultimately become untenable. Enduring economic success cannot be purchased at the price of declining natural wealth and increasing social disparities.

Our findings leave us convinced that there are solutions, and we remain fundamentally optimistic. Nevertheless an honest, balanced review of today's reality is sobering indeed.

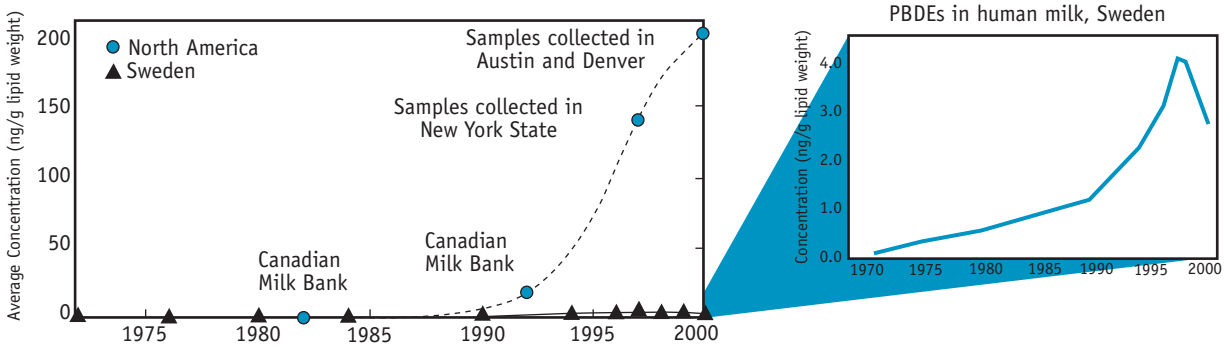
Health at Risk, Toxins in Our Bodies:

- The incidence of all cancers combined is up 60% in the U.S. since 1950, age adjusted. A primary suspected cause: industrial chemicals.[1]
- Today 92,000 acres of toxic mud and sand sit on the bottom of Puget Sound, enough to cover all of Seattle and Tacoma combined. As a result, many fish are poisonous to eat and swimming can be hazardous to health.[2]
- Although new emissions of the toxic industrial by-product dioxin have declined in recent years, the U.S. EPA's latest scientific analysis concludes that the current background exposure level of US residents to dioxin currently exceeds what is "safe" by 100 to 1,000 times.[3]

Population Growing, Associated Problems More So:

- Current trends show Washington's population will double from 1998 to 2050—the equivalent of adding 29 new Spokanes or Tacomas.[4]
- By 2020, congestion is expected to affect fully one-third of all Washington roadways—more than 2,200 miles. This translates to three times more congestion than we have today.[5]
- Over the past twenty years, Washington's population has increased 43 percent, while the number of vehicles has grown 57 percent. Miles driven are up 88 percent.[6]

Toxins in Human Breast Milk



Used as fire retardants, PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers) are persistent toxins that may disrupt an array of human functions, including growth and reproduction. Levels of PBDEs have increased 200–fold (20,000%) in N. American women's breast milk in the last 10 years. PBDEs are now banned by the European Union, even though levels there are 40 times ***lower*** than in N. America.[7]

Today's Reality

Social Inequities On the Rise:

- Despite the economic boom of the 1990's, the poorest one-fifth of Washington families have seen virtually no rise in real income over the past twenty years. Meanwhile, Washington's richest 20% had their inflation-adjusted income increase more than 40%.[8]

- One third of all Washington students and more than 50% of the state's African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American students do not graduate from high school. Tragic in its own right, the inequity is even more disturbing given that nearly 30% of Washingtonians hold Bachelor's degrees or higher.[9]

- The U.S. currently has nearly two million people in prison, more than any other country on earth. Our *per capita* incarceration rate also leads the world, having undergone a nine-fold increase over the past 25 years. In Washington, using constant dollars, our spending on prisons is up nearly 80% since 1980; spending on education is up 11%.[10]

- As a country, it is notable that we lead two lists for the major industrialized countries: highest per capita income, and highest percentage of population living below the poverty level (17%).[11]

Decline and Disruption in our Natural Systems:

- Climate change is emerging as one of the major challenges of our industrial age. We now have the highest levels of CO_2 in the atmosphere in perhaps 20 million years. Recent federal government analyses indicate that the consequence for Washington will be a loss of 63–87% of our state's mountain snowpack by the end of this century—and 50% will be lost by 2050. The resultant impacts on drinking water, electricity production, agriculture, fish, and ecosystems are expected to be severe.[12]

- Despite having a strong state drinking water program in place, since 2000 Washington has averaged being the fifth worst state in the nation in our rate of health-based drinking water violations, affecting at times 20 percent of the population.[13]

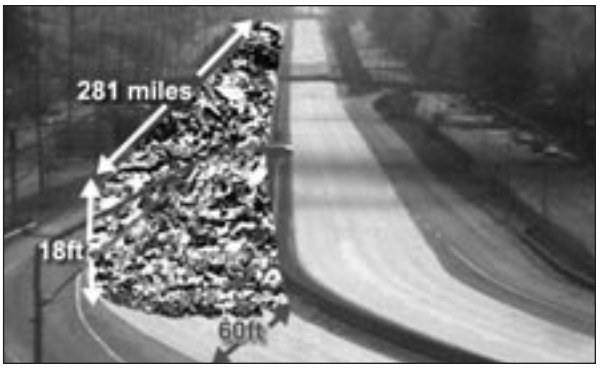
- Three fifths of Washington's rivers and sixty-five percent of Washington's 3,000 square miles of estuaries are in poor or fair health.[14]

Loss of Economic Vitality, Opportunities Unrealized:

- Washington's economy is in a severe recession, reflecting not just the boom and bust cycle, but significant structural changes in the economy. Since May 2001, Washington has steadily lost jobs in almost all sectors—55,700 non-farm jobs lost from July 2001 to July 2002 alone. Employment has fallen 35% in the aircraft and parts industries since 1999, a loss of 40,000 jobs, and 14% just since 2001 in computers, data processing, and communications, putting 16,000 out of work. In the forest products sector, 14,000 jobs have been lost since 1998.[15]

- In contrast, European Union countries have generated about 100,000 new jobs in wind energy, where the private sector with public support has captured about 90 percent of the world market share. If the world's installed wind energy capacity doubles in the next four years, which is its current growth rate, an additional new 100,000 jobs are expected to be created.[16]

- In 1999, Washingtonians disposed of 6.4 million tons of waste, enough to cover four lanes of I-90 from Spokane to Seattle 18 feet deep. If all these wastes were instead recycled and used for re-manufacturing, it could create 15,000 new jobs.[17]



In 1999, 6.4 million tons were disposed, enough to span I-90 from Spokane to Seattle.[17A]

Threatened Biodiversity, Habitat, Icons:

- Federal and state governments have listed over 50 Washington species that are in danger of extinction, including our regional icon the wild salmon. Field biologists have identified more than 10 times as many additional species in peril. Worldwide, 10–33% of all plant and animal species are threatened, including 25% of all mammals.[18]

Today's Reality

- Orcas traveling through Puget Sound currently have the highest concentrations of PCB's ever measured in any mammals. In the last seven years, their population has declined 20%, and PCB's are the suspected reason.[19]

- Since 1980, Washington cod catches have declined 90%. There are essentially no butter clams or pollock left. Herring stocks are depleted. Rockfish are on the brink of local extinction. Washingtonians caught more than 21 million pounds of whiting only 15 years ago—today, none.[20]

- In addition to the historical loss of two-thirds of our old growth forests and 99% of our intact Palouse Prairie ecosystem, we have also lost to development more than one million acres of Washington farmland and more than one million acres of Washington timberland in just the past two decades.[21]

If our present behavior continues unabated, we—and our children and grandchildren who come after us—will live in a state that is likely to offer little of the quality of life that has made Washington so attractive. Indeed, we have already lost much of what was enjoyed by Washingtonians just a few generations ago. It is critical that we take responsibility for the consequences of our actions and attempt to reverse current patterns. Our solutions must be thoughtful and far-reaching, affecting the fundamental choices and actions of our government, our businesses, our communities, and our families. This is the essential challenge of our generation.

Up to the Challenge:
Building on Our Advantages

Fortunately, we have a number of strengths to bring to the task. We share a strong sense of place. Our individual lives and cultural identity are linked to the natural resources and landscapes that form our regional legacy of abundance. We are recognized as a world leader in technology and innovation. Our diverse communities and cultures provide fertile ground for local experimentation and new economies. We have a wealth of visionaries and pragmatists, bold entrepreneurs, and wise scientists. Many have already begun working toward sustainability. Our rich pool of natural and human resources gives us a unique opportunity to meet this immense challenge and create an enduring legacy for our children.

New Path Forward

We therefore propose a plan of action to alter current trends that takes advantage of our strengths and provides guidelines and strategies for achieving a common vision. Our commitment is not to something completely new or strange, but rather to the careful, ongoing redesign of our social, industrial, and political processes.

We are convinced that such systematic redesign will ensure the healthy families, natural wealth, vibrant communities, responsible citizenship, and healthy economy to which the people of this state aspire.

Thus, we present two major sets of actions. We begin by outlining the overarching *Essential Strategic Outcomes* we as a state will commit to achieving by 2030. Then, we sketch our specific initial steps toward a sustainable future in the *Priority Action Recommendations* section.

We have set 2030 as a benchmark date to help identify both the enormity of the change required and the time it may take to achieve substantial progress. This is not intended as a stopping point, but rather the time when we will have come far enough along that it will be clear to all that we are well and truly on the new path, and it will be easier to move forward than to turn back. Looking 25 years into the past, we see many arenas of unprecedented changes, not the least of which included a new high-tech sector. We can expect no less of the next 25 years, especially if we encourage new sustainable sectors. There is much we can hope for and work toward, yet much of the new path forward will be created in the stories to be crafted along the way.

Nevertheless, certain *Strategic Outcomes* are not only clear, they are essential. And so we begin with the ways our state will be different a generation from now—the outcomes we commit to achieving that will characterize a truly sustainable future for our children and grandchildren.

Essential Strategic Outcomes for 2030

1. Reliance on Renewable Energy

Our reliance on fossil fuels has high environmental, social, and economic costs. Meanwhile, the renewable energy sector is growing rapidly, and here in Washington we have the natural resources, climate, and geography to become an economic hub for renewable energies. Through this sector Washington can both reinvigorate our economy and help lead global change. By 2030, we will have dramatically increased our energy efficiency and conservation, and we will meet virtually all of our energy needs through solar, wind, hydrogen, and other renewable sources.

2. Engaged Communities

In Washington and around the world, innovative partnerships are creating new models to preserve the environment, protect the vulnerable, and provide equality of opportunity. As business, industry, labor, and consumers build on those models, they will learn that loss of any valuable resource harms not one community but the interests of all communities. By 2030, an engaged citizenry will be vested with the regional and local responsibility, authority, and accountability to care for the resources essential to economic, environmental, and social well-being.

3. No Waste

Science discovered early on that there is no concept of waste in nature. Today, foresighted businesses have already begun to mimic that through innovative design, resource-sharing, and modern manufacturing methods. Through design changes and recycling, Sony, Ricoh, and dozens of other large companies today produce no landfill waste at all from many of their factories.[21A] Norway is about to ban landfills; cities, states, and countries all over the world already have action plans underway to achieve zero waste to landfills within the next 10 years.

By 2030, Washington businesses, government, and consumers will be financially rich and socially satisfied because what used to be thought of as wastes will actually have become resources to be cycled into new goods or services, or substances that can be harmlessly reabsorbed into our natural systems. Toxic materials will be systematically eliminated from our state.

4. Costs Paid in Full

Today's taxes and financial incentives too often reward things we want to inhibit, such as resource use, and punish things we want to support, such as business development. Additionally, we do not assign value to the loss of natural resources, yet these losses carry enormous costs. Innovative methods of shifting taxes are currently being designed and implemented around the world to more accurately reflect the true costs and benefits of our inputs and activities on natural and social resources. Smart regulations can also be used as incentives for positive change. By 2030, we will take responsibility for the costs of all the inputs, goods, and services we make and use. To avoid getting bills that are too high to pay, we will have both our taxes and our incentives reflect wise natural and social resource policy.

5. An Educated Public

Literacy and education have long been viewed as key indicators of social and economic well-being. By 2030, we will foster a vibrant educational system—pre-school through university. We will ensure equal access and opportunity, and value youth as a future resource. Lifelong learning and public media will be integral components of a highly-educated, involved, and well-informed public.

6. Economic Vitality Through Natural Resource Innovation

Currently our society has an over-reliance on our natural capital. New technologies and design approaches, however, are already available to begin reducing that. As we continue along this part of the path, the use of innovative technologies and design strategies will dramatically reduce the volume of materials and energy required to produce our goods and services. By 2030, the fundamental design and construction of our industrial processes, buildings, transportation systems, and other infrastructure will achieve radical improvements in resource productivity—again creating vast new opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, information technology, and wealth creation, as well as nurturing our human resources.

7. Social Justice

Applying the sustainability lens to the issues of social justice, criminal justice, equitable health care, and effective human relations will mean working within an interconnected framework focused on maximizing human resources and potential. Using human development indicators to track our steps forward, we will mark our progress and transitions. By 2030, we will have in place the vibrant institutions and engaged communities that protect the most vulnerable members of society, hold all accountable to civic norms, and foster the wisest development of our human resources.

8. Enduring Natural Resources

By 2030, we will actively respect and preserve natural ecological systems, and will understand and live within our regional carrying capacity. We will use stewardship, wisdom, and planning as we intersect with nature in wetlands, forestry, agriculture, industry, cities, towns, and communities. Our proactive approach to maintaining biodiversity and encouraging the survival of species and habitats will help ensure healthy air, water, soil, and ecosystems for future generations.

Priority Action Recommendations

Pursuing this new path forward requires both urgent action and long-term changes in virtually all sectors of society, as the hundreds of ideas compiled by the Panel can attest.* The eleven recommendations presented in this Action Plan were selected as priorities, because they build on the momentum of existing sustainability initiatives, contribute to economic development, tackle critical resource issues, use the power of government to drive change, build public awareness so that progress can occur more quickly, and link directly to our longer-term strategic outcomes.

The Panel recognizes the challenges of moving forward with this agenda at a time of economic hardship and record budget deficits for the state and many local governments. These problems are a reminder of how unsustainable our current path really is.

Government, business, community groups, and individuals all have a vital role to play in assuming leadership positions within their spheres of influence. The Panel invites all organizations and individuals across the state to explore how they can contribute to the success of the recommendations presented in this Action Plan.

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*In the course of its work, the Panel compiled many ideas for actions that could help create a sustainable future for Washington state. Interested parties can access these supplemental ideas at http://sustainableseattle.org/sustpanel/index.html.

Increase Economic Vitality

1. **Invest in clean energy as a major economic development opportunity** for Washington State through adopting and implementing a *Clean Energy Business Development Strategy* and establishing clean energy standards for energy production.

2. **Create an Institute for Innovation and Sustainable Development,** to serve as the focal point for research, design, and investment in sustainable technologies, processes, and social system solutions.

Take Action on Critical Resource Issues

3. **Commit to greenhouse gas reduction targets and mitigation strategies** as the basis for developing a low-carbon, high-performance economy.

4. **Sustain Washington's natural resources** through collaborative planning, monitoring, protection and restoration programs, new investments, and market-based initiatives.

Lead by Example

5. **Adopt industry-sponsored "green building" standards for all new state government construction projects.**

6. **Establish goals for state government procurement of sustainable goods and services.**

7. **Align the state's capital spending decisions with policies that encourage efficient development.**

Provide Incentives

8. **Begin to shift the tax burden to promote sustainable outcomes and raise needed revenues** by increasing selected user fees and pollution taxes and then lowering taxes on enterprise and citizens.

9. **Provide local governments with the autonomy to implement innovative approaches to achieving sustainable outcomes.**

Build Awareness and Measure Progress

10. **Engage and inform citizens and stakeholders about sustainability** through a series of forums and by widely disseminating this Action Plan.

11. **Define, document, and communicate progress towards the vision of a sustainable Washington** through producing a set of sustainability performance measures.

1. Invest in Clean Energy Technologies as a Major Economic Development Opportunity

Become a world leader in the development of and reliance on efficient and renewable energy technologies.

The sustainable economies of the future will be based on clean, non-polluting technologies. In particular, they will be hyper-efficient in their use of energy and powered by renewables such as solar, hydrogen, and wind. Developing these clean energy technologies of tomorrow represents an extraordinarily compelling economic opportunity for Washington State, rivaling software and biotechnology in its potential effect on our economy.

Opportunity

Washington has the chance to be a world leader in the renewable-energy field, reaping the benefits of cutting-edge capital investment, high-paying jobs, and wealth creation that come from such leadership. Communities throughout the state could benefit—urban centers would meet their energy needs without polluting the air or water, workers could see the creation of skilled jobs and training opportunities, and rural communities could harness wind power and biogas to provide energy for a thriving regional economy. Environmental dividends include protecting regional and global ecosystems by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Human health would improve through reduced air pollution. Finally, clean energy can help support a competitive, robust economy by insulating the region against the spikes in prices of electricity, gasoline, and natural gas that have brought periodic hardship and recession in recent decades.

Clean Energy Technologies

This field includes efficient systems, conservation technologies, and renewable energy. Examples include: *fuel cells, super-efficient magnetic motor drives, hydrogen technologies, energy communication & control devices, and advanced rail & truck technology.*

Many of these are being developed in Washington State.

With the state's history of reliance on hydropower, our leadership in the aerospace and information technology fields, and a high level of entrepreneurial investment in clean energy systems such as fuel cells, Washington is positioned perfectly to develop a dynamic center of clean energy innovation and enterprise.

Action Steps

The Panel recognizes the efforts already underway toward realizing this potential, such as the Governor's emphasis on renewable energy as a focal point for economic vitality, substantial private investment in new technologies, and public/private initiatives to build capacity. However, Washington does not encourage clean energy development systematically as many other states do, so we risk losing out on the opportunity for leadership. To build on the momentum and provide the basis for achieving a leadership role in clean energy, the Panel recommends that:

- **The Governor, with support from the Legislature, formulate and adopt a *Clean Energy Business Development Strategy*.** Such a strategy, based on an assessment of barriers, opportunities, and essential policy changes, would establish targets for job growth, business development, investment, and reductions in dependence on fossil fuels over time. An effective strategy would strive to engage the private sector as well as research institutions. The strategy would include recruitment and retention of clean energy enterprises as well as support for new technology, development, and commercialization. It also would include development of exports to the Pacific Rim countries, where the most new energy demand is expected.

- **The Governor take the lead in working with other western governors to establish a regional alliance promoting clean energy development and markets.** Creating such an alliance across the western states could provide the critical mass of markets and policies to stimulate private sector investment in alternative energy systems.

- **The Legislature establish a clean energy performance standard for Washington energy suppliers.** This standard would require that energy providers who sell power in Washington State either 1) have a minimum level of energy from renewable sources and efficiency investments in their resource portfolio; or 2) earmark a percentage of their revenues for such clean energy investments. Montana, Oregon, and California already earmark a percentage of utility revenues for such investments. California also has a renewable portfolio standard. Through such legislation, Washington can provide the investment and business climate needed for clean energy companies to locate in the state.

> The decisions we make about energy are central to economic security and environmental quality. It is time for Washington to capitalize on emerging technologies, considerable momentum, and opportunities for innovation by committing forcefully to a clean energy path.

- **The Legislature fund the creation of a multi-stakeholder task force to prepare a strategic plan for bio-based clean energy for rural areas.** Developing and then implementing such a strategic plan would benefit farmers and rural residents. Promising opportunities for clean energy from rural providers include cellulosic biomass fuels, biodiesel, biogas from dairy waste, and solar and wind power. The Panel recommends that the Governor and the appropriate legislative committees provide funds for this planning effort, to be executed by the Department of Agriculture with assistance from the Department of Ecology. The plan should position Washington to attract federal investment associated with the new energy title in the federal Farm Bill.

- **Universities and the public and private sectors focus research, development, and venture funding on clean energy technologies.** The growth of the information technology and biotechnology industries in Washington is due in part to successful collaboration among public entities, academic institutions, and private capital. The ingredients for such collaboration in the clean energy field are now in place—private sector leadership, academic and research leadership, as well as strong public sector leadership. But to compete successfully with other regions focusing on clean energy industry development, Washington needs a stronger commitment from the top in both the public and private sectors and from our academic and research institutions.

These actions are vital, achievable first steps to pave the way for Washington to take the lead in clean energy investments and technologies, providing a foundation for Washington State's economic success for the rest of this decade and the next.

2. Create an Institute for Innovation and Sustainable Development

Invest in intellectual capacity.

Solving the complex, overlapping problems required to achieve truly sustainable development demands our best thinking and our most pragmatic, creative commitments. Investing in intellectual capacity and becoming a global leader in innovation and development, initially in renewable energy and clean technologies, is the center of the path Washington needs to take in order to fully prosper in the new economy of the 21st century.

Opportunity

Our state has both enormous talent and significant entrepreneurial capital to create a new future. Local corporations are already developing breakthrough business models and moving from concepts to new products and solutions. State and local governments have pioneered innovative approaches. Our universities and locally-based non-profits nurture extraordinary researchers and wise activists. Washington's number one strategic advantage may be our ability to move from envisioning to enacting a better tomorrow.

Full sustainability, though, presents special challenges. Solutions will require new approaches characterized by intensive research, development, integration, collaboration, and a unique pragmatism, all customized to our specific corner of the planet. To empower the creativity and problem solving necessary, we will need to attract new investment, link venture capital, convene dialogues, devise new techniques for social development, conduct research on new ways to manage, and create entirely new industries and technologies.

Washington's leadership in the fields of hydropower, medicine, computer software, biotechnology, and green building was originally funded by both public and private investment. As our society transitions to a sustainable economy, Washington has the opportunity to develop new industries such as fuel cells, ecological restoration, and hydrogen energy.

Many efforts are already underway. Several of our universities and corporate sectors are leaders in attracting funds and building regional excellence. The work of some of our non-profits is internationally recognized. Our governments have implemented significant initiatives. None of these efforts, however, are large enough or systemic enough to achieve the scale to which we aspire. In addition, without an institutional framework to serve as a focus of these initiatives, we are losing both synergy and the ability to attract major new investment. Many other fundamental challenges remain unaddressed entirely. A strong partnership between private corporate investment, governments, non-profits, labor, tribes, and the universities is now needed to create and capture these opportunities.

Washington can—indeed, we are saying, should—become a leader and join far-sighted governments and corporations throughout the world by investing significant amounts of financial and human resources to solve the problems and build the practical integration across sectors that is needed to achieve sustainability. Delay will only deny our state the social and economic opportunities inherent in sustainable solutions, and hasten the decline of our social and natural resources.

2. Innovation Institute Continued

For Washington to become a leader in these arenas, our state must immediately begin to develop a proactive center dedicated to solving this complex thicket of problems. Thus, we recommend creating an institute for innovation and sustainable development. Its overall purpose will be to conduct applied research, create and demonstrate the practical application of sustainable technologies and strategies, and educate. As a public-private partnership, it will promote collaboration between universities, governments, public entities, and the private sector, and attract sustainability-driven investment to the state.

The functions of the institute are to:

- Provide a unified institutional framework for bringing parties together.
- Conduct and coordinate innovative, collaborative, applied work on sustainability-driven products, technologies, and strategies.
- Convene and promote practical, cross-disciplinary, multi-sector efforts that focus on social as well as economic and environmental research and innovation.
- Explore new ways to plan and manage institutions and enterprises using sustainability principles to accelerate development.
- Catalyze and support both new and existing sustainable development initiatives in the state.
- Link venture capital to innovation.
- Organize and coordinate educational initiatives related to sustainability.
- Develop private and public funding.

Action Steps

The Panel will work with others to lead the effort to establish this institute. Initial activities include:

- Work with the Governor to convene business, community, labor, tribal, and non-profit leaders along with state universities and private investors to establish a steering committee and initiate the new institutional framework.
- Formulate a broad strategic plan that includes the research, social and commercial development, technology, and education agendas.
- Identify an interim board or partnership to lead the effort.
- Raise private and non-profit funding to establish the institute.

3. Take Action on Global Warming

Commit to greenhouse gas reductions and limiting carbon dioxide emissions from power plants to reverse Washington's contribution to global warming.

The costs of failing to stabilize the climate are almost unfathomable. In Washington, scientists expect dramatic reductions in snowpack, with associated economic hardships from hydropower losses, reduced water availability, lost habitat, and disruption of forest ecosystems. The scientific debate on the basic facts of global warming is over. Particularly in view of the extraordinary economic opportunities associated with pioneering solutions, the time for Washington to set forth a strong climate protection platform is now.

The international treaty to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other "greenhouse gases" will take effect in 2003. The US government is not a signatory. Nevertheless, the rest of the world's advanced economies will begin the process of reducing their fossil fuel consumption and turning the corner toward a new, clean technology economy.

Opportunity

While the federal government is not part of this effort, many U.S. states and cities are. Over 130 U.S. cities (including Spokane, Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia) are participants in the Cities for Climate Protection initiative. New York and California (collectively the world's third largest economy) are adopting strong new standards for global warming pollution from power plants and vehicles. Many other states are adopting greenhouse gas reduction goals. Nations, states, and communities are acting *now* to reap the economic benefits of practical clean technology, energy, and transportation solutions.

Washington must choose whether to get ahead of this curve or be left behind to cope with the growing economic, environmental, and social fallout of excessive fossil fuel dependence. The Panel believes strongly that sustainability requires immediate action to reduce greenhouse gases. It believes just as strongly that such actions will improve Washington's economic performance by creating job growth in the rapidly expanding clean energy sector and reducing the huge economic drain associated with importing fossil fuels.

Action Steps

The Panel recommends that:

- **The Governor and Legislature commit Washington to greenhouse gas reduction targets** as the basis for developing a low-carbon, high-performance economy. These targets should be linked clearly to increased use and production of clean energy, as well as reduced expenditures on fossil fuels.

- **The Governor explore collaboration on climate protection with other Northwest and west coast states and provinces,** as the northeastern governors and eastern Canadian premieres have done. A collaborative approach would have multiple benefits, including creating the infrastructure for carbon trading markets and increasing leverage for cleaner vehicles in western markets.

- **The Governor establish this climate protection goal in 2003, consistent with international timelines and targets.** The Governor could then appoint a task force to identify the most economically attractive strategies to reach the goal. Economic growth in clean energy industries should be a target strategy. Standards to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles, similar to proposals now being considered in New York and California, should also be considered as part of these strategies.

3. Global Warming Continued

Initial Step: Reduce Carbon Dioxide from Power Plants

The Washington Energy Facility Siting Evaluation Council currently is evaluating proposals to require new power plants to limit or otherwise mitigate associated carbon dioxide emissions.

- **The Panel recommends that the Siting Council adopt strong greenhouse gas mitigation standards for all new facilities.** These standards should apply to the large (over 350 megawatt) facilities currently regulated by the Siting Council. Washington's standard should exceed the existing Oregon standard, which is now outdated.
- To ensure that smaller facilities also mitigate greenhouse gases, **the Department of Ecology should adopt simultaneously an equivalent standard for new power plants under 350 megawatts.**
- If the Siting Council does not move forward with strong CO_2 standards, the Panel recommends that the Governor support and the Legislature enact legislation requiring mitigation.
- Once standards for new power plants are adopted, the Panel urges stakeholders to develop an effective plan to mitigate carbon dioxide emissions from current facilities. This plan should be part of the longer-term strategy to meet the climate protection goals recommended above.

The Panel recognizes the complexity of this issue and encourages parties to work together to adopt an approach that provides facility developers and operators with flexibility and incentives for compliance. This approach should be structured to accommodate competitively priced power production and family wage jobs while accounting fairly for the environmental costs of plant operation. The bottom line is that greenhouse gases must be reduced drastically to achieve a sustainable future and provide for a clean energy economy. Accordingly, power plants must take substantial action *now* to mitigate greenhouse gases associated with energy production.

4. Sustain Washington's Natural Resources and Ecosystems

Develop and implement collaborative plans, programs, and initiatives for sustaining Washington's natural resources.

Opportunity

Historically, our prosperity, our cultural identity, and the very character of Washington have been rooted in healthy green forests, abundant clean waters teeming with fish, and working agricultural landscapes. Looking ahead, the natural environment and its biological and physical components are the most basic elements of any sustainable future that we envision for ourselves. Wildlife and wildlands, forests and fisheries, intact ecosystems and the natural processes that build our soils and cleanse our waters are as essential to our future as they have been to our past.

As we move forward, however, fundamental changes are occurring. Clearly, in the past, our natural resources have been abundant, affordable, and superb. But now, the mantle of life in Washington is at risk. Individual resources—water, fish, soil—as well as ecosystems and complex natural processes are in jeopardy. We understand and monitor precious little about these natural systems. To achieve our desired future, we will likely need to protect our natural heritage much more actively than we do today. Increasingly, we recognize the potential of irretrievable damage to these valuable common resources of our "Evergreen" state.

Action Steps

Action items to move forward with this priority recommendation include:

- **Monitor and report on ecological health:** On-going monitoring and reporting on the health of our most vital wildlands, shorelines, and ecosystems are essential to understanding and taking action on critical threats to these resources. The State can partner with appropriate non-profits and Native tribes, as well as the Federal Government and local entities to develop and implement effective monitoring systems. These monitoring data can then be available to communities and serve as the longitudinal basis for further locally-based collaborative strategies and action plans to protect and restore the state's ecological systems.

- **Move towards an integrated approach to natural resource planning:** The Departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, Agriculture, and Natural Resources should work with each other and with communities, tribes, and businesses to explore new inter-agency approaches to integrated planning and managing of natural resources. The objective is to identify and proactively address cumulative impacts on vulnerable resources and ecosystems.

- **Support pilot projects:** It is vital for public entities as well as the private and non-profit sectors to fund pilot projects in sustainable agriculture, soil restoration, and water conservation, including the education and public involvement activities necessary to ensure successful implementation. Successful local initiatives can then be expanded statewide, leveraging the initial investment in the pilot projects.

4. Natural Resources Continued

- **Invest in long-term sustainable agriculture:** The Governor is encouraged to designate sustainable agriculture as a vital societal goal, and a priority economic development area. To support progress here, the Governor can form a task force of agricultural, economic development, and marketing specialists to recommend a strategic plan and investment strategy for how to transition Washington State to becoming a leader in long-term sustainable agricultural practices.

- **Certify State forests:** The State, through the Board of Natural Resources, should obtain certification for sustainable harvesting of all DNR timberlands under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) protocols.

- **Support marine ecosystems:** Regulatory and funding commitments to fisheries and marine ecosystem monitoring, protection, and restoration should be maintained. Collaborative initiatives should be pursued to preserve and enhance marine ecosystems, working collaboratively through such entities as the Puget Sound Action Team.

5. Establish "Green Building" Standards for Public Sector Construction Projects

Lead by example in the design and construction of resource-efficient buildings.

Buildings fundamentally affect people's well-being as well as the health of the planet. In the United States, buildings consume one third of total energy,[22] two-thirds of all electricity,[23] and one-eighth of the nation's water.[24] Air emissions from buildings constitute thirty percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions,[25] and produce 136 million tons of construction and demolition waste in the U.S. (approx. 2.8 lbs/person/day).[26] Buildings are also responsible for forty percent (3 billion annual tons) of global raw materials use.[27]

Opportunity

Green building design and construction seeks to reduce these negative effects on natural resources and the environment, while providing a productive and healthy environment for building occupants and a good investment for building owners. Currently, the U.S. Green Building Council is promoting and advancing green building methods for commercial construction successfully on a nationwide basis, using the LEED™ green building rating and certification system.

By adopting LEED™ standards, Washington State can benefit from buildings that have decreased operating costs, use natural resources judiciously, and conserve energy resources. Washington also can contribute to the development of the market for green building designs, technologies, and materials. Innovation in this market is simultaneously creating new products and construction materials, fueling new businesses, and creating new jobs.

The LEED™ Program

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program is a system of design goals and strategies that provides guidance to commercial building owners, designers, construction contractors, and operators.

The system is gaining acceptance rapidly, with over 500 registered projects in the U.S. As a certification system, LEED™ recognizes leaders in the field, stimulates competition in the real estate market, and helps establish a building's market value with a recognizable and credible "brand." It has been highly successful in raising consumer awareness and helping to transform the building industry.

Others Leading the Way

- Oregon's Facilities Division, Executive Order EO-00-07
- California, Executive Order D-16-00
- The Federal General Services Administration
- City of Seattle – LEED Silver

5. Green Building Continued

Action Steps

The Panel recommends that:

- **The State commit this year to achieving a "Silver" LEED™ rating for new state-owned buildings over 5000 square feet, through executive order or legislation.** This level is achievable at little or no extra cost to the project.
- **The State incorporate allowances for LEED™ costs into relevant funding cycles, to allow for extra up-front expenses** (2% to 5% of costs) in planning, design, and equipment purchases that will result in savings over the life of the buildings.
- **The State commit to achieving the highest LEED™ rating (Platinum at this time) for new state-owned buildings no later than 2030**, through executive order or legislation. This longer-term goal will spur innovation and momentum in green building.
- **Local governments and the private sector adopt similar standards.**

"The leadership that the U.S. Green Building Council has shown to promote green building is extraordinary, and so important to our future. As the agency that manages space in 8,300 buildings, we understand how big a difference we can make for the environment. GSA supports what the Council is doing, and we are committed to using the LEED™ rating system in our buildings."

—Dave Barram,
former Administrator, U.S.
General Service Administration

These actions can all be readily implemented in the next 6–12 months. They represent the first steps in a vital longer-term effort to make sustainable design and building practices the norm in Washington. Subsequent initiatives should target infrastructure (such as road projects and new developments) as well as remodels. These efforts should also focus on building partnerships with local governments, the military, ports, and the private sector to build demand for "green building" practices.

The award winning Bainbridge Island City Hall was the first major building project in the Northwest to use certified sustainably harvested wood.

6. Use Purchasing Power to Build Demand for Sustainable Products

Develop legislation to set goals for State agencies' purchase of sustainably produced products.

Large purchasers can exercise enormous power to influence markets in socially beneficial directions. The nation's 87,000 federal, state, and local governments spend $385 billion a year on goods and services, or one in every five dollars spent in the economy. In Washington, state government purchases of goods and services are estimated at over $1 billion per year.

Opportunity

Washington State has several opportunities to increase its purchase of sustainably produced goods and services cost-effectively. While government agencies have taken many steps to increase the availability of environmentally preferable goods and services (including energy-efficient lamps, hybrid electric vehicles, recycled-content office products, and refurbished furniture), much more can be done. The adoption of goals for purchasing sustainable products and the development of standards for priority products will increase their availability and ultimately lower prices. In addition, forming partnerships with other governments and entities such as ports and the military provides further opportunities to leverage buying power and expand markets for sustainable products.

Action Steps

To take advantage of these benefits, the Panel recommends that:

- **The Legislature direct the Department of General Administration's Office of State Procurement (OSP) to set goals for the purchase of sustainably produced products and services.** Legislation passed in 1991 that set goals for the purchase of recycled-content products has proven to be a critical driver in pushing state agencies to increase the purchase of such products. Adoption of new, more comprehensive legislation will strengthen the existing Executive Order on Sustainability and ensure that sustainable procurement programs will continue past the current administration.

  Specifics of such legislation might include:
  - Setting goals for the purchase of sustainably produced products and services;
  - Adopting standards for priority products;
  - Phasing out the purchase of goods with persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic materials;
  - Mandating that electronic equipment be taken back by the manufacturer at the end of its useful life, and that manufacturers provide for environmentally sound disposition of the equipment;
  - Developing sustainable purchasing training for contracts staff and purchasing officers; and
  - Setting goals for smarter purchasing to reduce consumption and waste.

- The Governor adopt an Executive Order similar to the above legislation, if the legislature fails to act expeditiously.

- Local governments adopt similar programs, perhaps based on the model legislation passed by the State Legislature, and the State actively work with these governments to create purchasing partnerships to expand these markets.

7. Foster Sustainable Development through Public Investment

Align capital spending decisions with policies that encourage efficient development.

The National Governor's Association challenges state and local governments to align spending priorities to foster compact development and limit spending on infrastructure that encourages or subsidizes sprawl.

Opportunity

The Panel recommends that Washington take concrete action in 2003 to align its investment strategies and capital spending decisions to realize the goals of compact, efficient development. Too often, the State's infrastructure investments have lagged behind urban development or been completely absent. The State's walk must match its talk if sustainable development is to be encouraged. Washington State should become a model for responsible capital spending.

Action Steps

The Panel recommends that the Legislature formulate and enact legislation that sets forth new policies, practices, and incentives to align state capital investment spending with sustainable development in the following ways:

- **Adopt a resolution stating that state capital spending and investment decisions shall:**
  - Encourage growth consistent with comprehensive plans approved under the Growth Management Act, where those plans are applicable;
  - Be targeted to support development in areas where infrastructure exists or is planned as part of growth management strategies, where applicable;
  - Not encourage or subsidize sprawl; and
  - Discourage growth in environmentally critical areas and allocate appropriate funding for restoration, preservation, and/or acquisition of the highest priority natural resource areas identified in Shoreline Master Programs, DNR forest holdings, and local and county Comprehensive Plans.

This proposal for Washington is based on a model piece of legislation now being considered by the Massachusetts State Legislature.

Over the last few years, several states including Maryland, California, and Massachusetts have reviewed their policies and suggested changes in how decisions are made when investing public resources. For example, in Maryland, the Governor has changed proposed locations of capital projects from suburban sites to infill parcels in distressed smaller cities as an economic development strategy and has set aggressive investment targets to double transit ridership over the next decade.

- **Direct the Office of Financial Management and the Legislative capital budget committees to formulate guidelines and criteria for investment decisions consistent with this sustainable development policy framework.**

- **Establish an Investment Incentive Fund for Sustainable Development.** Resources could be obtained in various ways including direct funding or by dedicating a minimum percentage (such as 1/10th of 1%) of State-issued bonds into the account of the Sustainable Washington Fund. The Office of Financial Management, in consultation with the Panel and other state agencies, will administer this fund. The purpose of this fund, similar to the Transportation Investment Board, would be to support strategic and concurrent infrastructure investments in targeted areas based on comprehensive plans, economic development strategies, and sustainable policies and practices.

8. Create Incentives for Sustainable Development through Tax Shifting

Begin shifting the tax burden to promote sustainable outcomes, lowering taxes on enterprise and citizens while increasing user fees and pollution taxes; in the short term, use tax shifting as a means to raise revenues to help close the deficit.

The State of Washington currently taxes things it wants more of—such as the expansion of new and existing enterprises—and imposes only limited fees on activities it wants less of—such as pollution, resource depletion, sprawl, and traffic. Over time we must reverse this policy, reducing conventional taxes and generating revenues from "green" taxes.

Opportunity

In the short run, adopting such an approach can help raise revenues and close the budget gap, providing critical funding for education, social services, and sustainability investments. In the long run, this approach can be revenue-neutral, leading to a reduction in general taxes such as the sales or property tax, or elimination of taxes such as the B&O tax.

Action Steps

To begin this transition, the Panel recommends that the Legislature, as part of the next biennial budget, judiciously enact new user fees and pollution taxes while phasing out exemptions that promote resource depletion. Possible opportunities include:

- **Develop a strategy to shift highway and road costs to motor vehicle users**, possibly through tolls, congestion pricing, gas taxes, and fees such as weight-and-mileage charges. This approach, set forth in the Washington State Tax Structure Study Committee report, is strongly endorsed by the Sustainability Panel.
- **Increase user fees to allocate the cost of environmental protection more directly to activities that harm natural resources.** This approach also was proposed in the Tax Structure Committee report. Possible changes to user fees include:
  - **Increase fees to administer laws related to hazardous and solid waste management, clean air, and clean water.** Fees for Air Operating Permits and Wastewater Discharge Permits could be increased, the solid waste disposal surcharge (which expired in 1998) could be reinstated, and water permit fees (which have remained unchanged since 1917) could be increased.
  - **Consider a front-end fee for purchases of electronics equipment such as computers** to fund the cost of safe collection and recycling of this equipment, which rapidly becomes obsolete and contains heavy metals and other hazardous substances.
  - **Apply a toxics tax to such items as pesticides and products containing mercury and other persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic materials.**
  - **Apply a small fee to the sale of new motor vehicles to fund diesel emission reduction and mercury retrofit programs for school buses.**
- **Periodically review all tax exemptions,** phasing out those exemptions that do not contribute to long-term economic, social, and environmental vitality. The Tax Commission also recommended this strategy.
- **Formulate a strategy to systematically reduce taxes over time on expenditures and investments that encourage economic, social, and environmental vitality.** For example, taxes such as the B&O tax could be phased out and replaced by taxes on the unsustainable consumption of natural resources.

9. Empower Local Governments to Pursue Sustainable Development

Provide local governments, through legislative change and economic incentives, with the autonomy to implement innovative approaches to achieving sustainable outcomes.

Opportunity

Many of Washington's diverse communities including cities, counties, and special purpose districts, are eager to improve their area's quality of life and sustain a healthy economy. Many are already committed to the goal of a sustainable Washington. Too often, however, legal barriers imposed by obsolete statutes and parochial interests interfere with achieving that vision. To the extent that these local governments obtain their authorities through Washington's Legislature, it is incumbent upon the Legislature to enable those governments to make choices that contribute to a sustainable Washington.

Action Steps

The Panel recommends that:

- **The Governor support and the Legislature approve the legal ability of local governments to implement or modify local taxes to provide incentives for behaviors that result in sustainability.** These might include such actions as:
  - Providing tax relief for green building projects while at the same time increasing taxes on waste products.
  - Increasing local authority to use value pricing, or variable, electronic tolls on roads. Transportation planners around the world are embracing value pricing as the only real solution to traffic congestion, yet Washington localities are currently limited in their power to adopt this innovative, market-oriented solution.
  - Taxing the sale of fertilizer and pesticides that directly affect the quality of local water supplies and human health.
  - Providing local governments with the authority to impose fees on releases of toxic chemicals. Our cities and counties are currently not allowed to put "sin taxes" on the toxic substances released into their land, air, and waters.

- **The Governor support and the Legislature approve changes in local government purchasing statutes** that allow for more flexibility in adopting sustainable construction techniques and acquiring sustainably produced products.

- **The Governor support and the Legislature approve a funding mechanism to encourage the development of pilot programs at the local level** which are focused on sustainability by blending environmental and social considerations with sound economic development. For example, seed funding could be provided for the feasibility analyses and subsequent creation of biogas facilities to process agricultural wastes into energy and compost.

10. Build Awareness

Engage and inform citizens and stakeholders about sustainability.

Opportunity

In communities, the media, and schools, issues associated with economic vitality, environmental health, and societal well-being usually are considered separately, and the linkages between and among them often are lost. More fundamentally, individuals, families, and communities have a critical role in envisioning and choosing sustainability. It is, in fact, individual, daily actions and decisions that will ultimately provide the fundamental demand for sustainable markets and public services.

Social Capital

The term "social capital" is increasingly used to describe the community's well-being and the wealth that comes from a shared sense of vision, connection, engagement, and the ability to ignite citizen action for positive change.

Sustainability presents a unique challenge to our generation. Governments or businesses acting alone are unlikely to address sustainability effectively. Rather, true sustainability will require individuals, families, and communities working together to take daily action to craft the innovative approaches necessary to develop this new pathway. The public needs to be engaged through education and awareness building; likewise stakeholders must be engaged to build political support for sustainable strategies, policies, and programs.

Action Steps

To take the first steps toward building deeper public understanding of sustainability principles and practices, **the Panel commits to the following actions in 2003:**

- **Identify opportunities to collaborate with other organizations** (including those of Panel members) on outreach activities, including hosting workshops, conferences, and other types of learning opportunities about sustainability in Washington.
- **Disseminate the findings and recommendations from the Governor's Sustainable Washington Action Plan to a wide audience,** especially to organizations and constituencies who will play a key role in implementing recommendations.

Other possible actions could include:

- **Working with the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the state universities to encourage increased education** about and research on issues of sustainability.
- **Conducting Panel meetings in different parts of the state and hosting community forums in conjunction with those meetings.** These forums will offer the Panel the opportunity to engage with citizens from different communities, and ensure that the Panel's focus is rooted in the concerns of these citizens.
- **In collaboration with universities, organizing a workshop/forum for representatives from the media** (reporters, editors, publishers) and community leaders working on sustainability issues about ways to increase coverage of sustainability in the press. Ideally, this forum would be linked to current events or a noted speaker to maximize attendance.
- **Organizing an annual, statewide sustainability exposition and workshop.** This event could include displays of sustainable products, expert presentations, progress reports, and a recognition ceremony.

11. Measure Progress

Define, document, and communicate progress toward the vision of a sustainable Washington.

Opportunity

Other states, including Oregon and New Jersey, have used benchmark programs to report regularly on the health of their communities, economy, and natural resources in ways that have brought attention to problems and sparked new approaches and solutions. Washington can benefit from a similar set of statewide measures, that are broadly understood and supported, reflect the status of our journey towards sustainability, and help direct attention towards the most urgent needs. If these measures can be communicated effectively to a broad range of audiences, the public's understanding of long-term trends will increase as will our collective understanding of the integration of community, economic factors, and natural systems in creating a high quality of life.

Action Steps

To begin this foundation-building work, a multi-stakeholder partnership should be initiated to produce and disseminate a set of sustainable development performance measures for Washington State.

- **The Panel will take the first step in this effort, inviting organizations and individuals to join the partnership.** A diverse group of stakeholders will be contacted, including business representatives, governmental organizations, Native tribes, community leaders, and those with experience developing indicators for sustainability. The partners will be asked to determine *what* should be measured and *how* to measure it, with a focus on tracking and reporting on the "triple bottom line" of community, economic, and environmental well being.

- **The goal of this first action is to have, by the end of 2003, a fully established partnership in place** to initiate and guide future development of this benchmarking effort. The partnership will be asked to clearly define the resources required and an approach to obtaining those resources.

- In parallel, **non-governmental organizations and the private sector are encouraged to work with universities and other research institutions to develop standards of progress** towards true cost accounting of natural and social capital.

Summary of Action Recommendations: Who Is Responsible for What

Recommended Executive Office Initiatives

- Adopt and implement a Clean Energy Business Development Strategy for Washington State
- Establish a regional alliance to promote clean energy development and markets
- Commit Washington State to greenhouse gas reduction targets
- Explore collaboration on climate protection with other western governments
- Direct the Department of Ecology to establish standards for greenhouse gas mitigation for new power plants under 350 megawatts
- Direct state agencies to explore new integrated approaches to natural resource planning
- Direct state agencies to partner with other governments and non-profits to strengthen ecological monitoring programs and fund pilot projects for sustainable agriculture, soil restoration, and water conservation

Recommended Legislative Initiatives

- Commit Washington State to greenhouse gas reduction targets
- Establish a clean energy performance standard for Washington energy suppliers
- Fund the creation of a multi-stakeholder task force on biobased clean energy in rural areas
- Require "green building" standards for all new state government construction projects
- Establish goals for state government procurement of sustainable goods and services
- Better align capital spending decisions with policies that encourage efficient development
- Create an Incentive Investment Fund for Sustainable Development
- Begin shifting taxes to promote sustainable outcomes and raise needed revenues
- Develop a strategy to shift highway and road costs to motor vehicle users
- Provide local governments with the authority and flexibility to provide incentives for and implement programs to achieve sustainable outcomes

Recommended Action by Independent State Agencies	■ The Washington Energy Facility Siting Council: Adopt strong greenhouse gas mitigation standards for all new energy facilities ■ The Board of Natural Resources: Obtain certification for sustainable harvesting of all State timberlands under Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative protocols
Recommended Local Government Initiatives	■ Implement pilot projects and incentives to achieve locally based sustainable outcomes ■ Adopt the LEED™ green building standards for new office construction ■ Consider changes in tax structure and procurement
Recommended Private Sector and Community Group Activities	■ Support a clean energy technology strategy for Washington State ■ Invest in energy efficiency and shift to renewable energy sources ■ Adopt the LEED™ green building standards for new commercial construction ■ Help define and activate an Institute for Innovation and Sustainable Development ■ Support the establishment of sustainable development performance measures
Future Actions of the Governor's Sustainable Washington Panel	■ Lead the effort to establish an Institute for Innovation and Sustainable Development ■ Organize a series of forums and widely disseminate this Action Plan to engage and inform citizens and stakeholders about sustainability ■ Create a partnership to define, produce, and communicate a set of sustainable development performance measures for Washington State

Endnotes

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