

## Washington REALTORS® Climate & Energy Policy Statement

**BACKGROUND.** Climate and energy are important issues under consideration by the state and its local jurisdictions. How these governments choose to address the issues of climate change and energy through policies and regulations and how rapidly they are put in place will have a significant impact on Washington's homeowners, renters and businesses that include the residential and commercial real estate industry. Proposals to address climate change and modify how we generate and use energy will affect different parts of the economy in different ways. Some industries may be directly subject to a new "cap and trade" regulatory system that will seek to reduce carbon emissions. Other business sectors will experience indirect, but significant, impacts from climate change and energy policies through increased business costs, decreased consumer purchasing power, or programs seeking to address climate and energy issues by influencing consumer decisions through taxes, incentives, or marketing.

REALTOR® efforts on climate and energy issues will focus first on those issues that directly affect real estate transactions and the cost and supply of housing and land development. In addition, REALTORS® will work with businesses, utilities, and local governments on climate issues that while not directly affecting real estate transactions or development, will impact our economy and the real estate market.

A number of climate and energy topics will be critical to Washington's real estate industry:

- **Federal vs. State Regulation:** Climate and energy are global issues, and should not be addressed on a country-by-country or state-by-state basis. Our approach to climate change should not put Washington State or the United States at a competitive disadvantage to other states or countries.
- **Improving Energy Efficiency of Existing Homes and Buildings:** REALTORS® support tax incentives, grants, utility-homeowner partnerships, and other voluntary programs to increase the energy efficiency of homes and buildings. REALTORS® strongly oppose point-of-sale mandates, labeling, and mandatory energy audits.
- **Consumer Education and Marketing:** REALTORS® continue to develop, provide and support green education and marketing programs relating to energy efficiency and low impact development so that home and building owners can make informed decisions about cost-effective energy improvements and can use energy efficiency upgrades while lowering the greenhouse gas emissions of buildings.
- **Energy Standards for New Homes and Buildings:** REALTORS® will support energy code standards for new construction that are cost-effective and sustainable for the useful life of the buildings.
- **Land Use:** Amending the Growth Management Act (GMA) to include climate change regulations will result in uncertainty, litigation, and increased costs. Rather, REALTORS® support addressing climate change policies through the existing requirements of the GMA to accommodate growth in urban growth areas with a variety of densities and housing choices located near job centers and in areas with access to multi-modal transportation options. REALTORS®, at the same time, strongly believe that while implementing the GMA requirements we should preserve the lifestyle choices and the economic value of rural areas.
- **Transportation:** Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT) benchmarks provide an inaccurate measurement of carbon emissions from the transportation sector. New vehicle and alternative fuel technologies have already resulted in fewer carbon emissions per mile driven. VMT should not be used to control land use and transportation planning decisions.

• **Infrastructure/Transportation Funding:** Infrastructure (water, sewer and utilities) and transportation provide the framework upon which communities are built and are key to each community's ability to respond to climate and energy issues facing all of us today. REALTORS® support transportation and infrastructure funding programs that support the needs of a variety of local markets, both urban and rural. REALTORS® believe the state should develop transportation and infrastructure funding programs that support building our communities in a manner that accommodates population and employment growth and positively address such issues as air and water quality, stormwater runoff, waste management, and protection of natural areas and resource lands. This requires finding fair and broad-based ways to pay the costs of infrastructure investment that benefits the entire community.