



King County

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June 11, 2025

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Zahilay:

I am pleased to transmit the 2025 update of the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) and a proposed Motion that would, if approved, acknowledge receipt of the plan as required by King County Code (KCC) 18.25.010.A2. The SCAP is a biennial progress report on the County's climate work as required by KCC 18.50.010. Also enclosed with the SCAP is the Wildfire Risk Mitigation Strategy per Ordinance 19881; the Extreme Heat Mitigation Strategy, funded with a FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant and released in 2024; and the 2025 Climate and Workforce Strategy, an update to the green jobs strategy, as required by KCC 18.25.010.

The 2025 SCAP update recommends the County's next set of commitments that advance King County's leadership in equitable climate solutions, reducing climate risks, and protecting the natural environment for everyone who lives here today and for those who follow us. Despite over a decade of action, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in King County are four percent higher than in 2007, though eight percent lower than the 2019 peak. This signals some progress, but not enough.

Emissions reduction is not only a policy goal, but a moral and practical imperative. People across the region are experiencing more frequent record-breaking climate events like heat waves and wildfires. These events pose serious and growing risks to infrastructure, public health, and ecosystems, especially in frontline communities. Emissions reductions are essential to slowing climate change and avoiding its most severe health, economic, and environmental consequences.

This updated vision and new five-year roadmap is a guide on how King County will address the climate crisis. The 2025 SCAP updates the three sections from previous years: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Sustainable and Resilient Frontline Communities; and Preparing for Climate Change. It also introduces a new section with flagship outcomes as a holistic way to think about the intersection of sustainability, equity, and resilience. The Flagships section connects actions across the SCAP to broader goals that improve the lives of those who live, work, and visit King County. These nine flagships show that climate action is not just a set of individual goals, but a coordinated effort to create lasting, systemic change.

I am excited about the path the 2025 SCAP outlines to sharply reduce GHG emissions for both County operations and at the countywide scale. It builds on technical analysis, extensive public input, and partnership with diverse stakeholders to recommend specific actions to reach shared overarching goals.

Since adopting the 2020 SCAP, the County has worked with partners to develop the first-ever countywide strategies to prepare for extreme heat and to reduce the risk of wildfire, two issues that have become increasingly urgent in recent years. Through \$20 million of bond funded support in 2021, the County is also fulfilling its commitment to fund eight Climate Equity Capital Pool Projects to advance frontline community priorities. The selected projects improve climate resilience and include equitable climate career exposure opportunities for communities who are disproportionately impacted by climate change.

However, to build on this momentum that is starting to bend the curve of emissions, the County needs bolder action and stronger collaboration internally and externally with cities, businesses, and residents. Reflecting this shift, the 2025 SCAP represents a strategic evolution toward fewer, more impactful actions with clear, outcome-driven targets. This shift aligns closely with the formation of the Executive Climate Office and emphasis on cross-departmental collaboration, as well as Executive and King County Council direction on continuous improvement.

The 2025 SCAP update also builds on the County's role as a local government to lead by example. By directly implementing climate actions through its services and playing a key role in convening local partners to advocate for strong federal and state actions — King County seeks to eliminate countywide sources of GHG emissions over the next 25 years, increase climate equity and reduce climate risks.

The SCAP calls for:

- A 50 percent reduction of GHG emissions by 2030, 75 percent by 2040, and 95 percent to 100 percent (or net-zero) by 2050.
- Reducing fossil fuel usage in countywide buildings by 20 percent by 2030 and the transition to zero-emissions infrastructure and fleets.
- Advancing a countywide circular economy framework with zero waste of resources and zero edible food waste by 2030; and committing to increased purchasing of sustainable and recycled products.

- Elevating the voices of frontline communities and ensuring that frontline community members are empowered to shape climate policy and actions that address root causes of climate inequity — such as food security, utilities affordability, anti-displacement efforts and green workforce development.

Including diverse voices was a focus for the 2025 SCAP update. County staff pursued equity-driven engagement strategies, receiving input and direction from County partners, community leaders, County agency staff, frontline communities, and the public. Participants in workshops included environmental organizations, building industry representatives, labor, and businesses. Drawing from community engagement themes and the Climate Equity Work Group's climate equity review, the Equity Impacts and Opportunities section of each flagship ensures policies reflect the lived experiences and priorities of affected communities.

While we find ourselves in challenging times, King County has continued its climate leadership through challenging times before and will continue to do so again. However, the current political landscape and funding will affect the pace and scale of implementing actions. In the near term, County agencies are working to make climate action part of core work and budgets and are reviewing how existing resources, and existing and new partnerships can be used to implement the SCAP. In the long term, the County's ability to deliver on 2025 SCAP commitments is dependent on the structural funding mechanisms at the local, state, and federal level for transportation, energy, public health, workforce development, and critical infrastructure. We have included these dependencies on both existing and additional resources in the SCAP.

Thank you for your consideration of this SCAP update and proposed Motion, and continued partnership on climate action. This moment requires more than setting ambitious goals. It requires the courage to transform entire systems to reduce the harmful effects of climate change and build a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable King County.

Transmitted separately and simultaneously with this 2025 SCAP and proposed Motion is a proposed Ordinance that would amend King County Code to better reflect contemporary best practices, new research and programs, and changes in terminology.

If your staff have questions, please contact Marissa Aho, Director, Executive Climate Office, at 206-259-1737.

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay

June 11, 2025

Page 4

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Braddock', written over a horizontal line.

for

Shannon Braddock

King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Stephanie Pure, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

Marissa Aho, Director, Executive Climate Office