

September 18, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Century Agenda. These comments are from several chapters of [People for Climate Action](#), a coalition of 15 groups throughout King County whose mission is to help jurisdictions meet their K4C (King County Cities Climate Collaboration) carbon emission reduction goals.

The Port of Seattle faces a fundamental quandary: its primary activities - maritime and aviation - emit vast quantities of greenhouse gases, [far more](#) than are emitted by the [entire city of Seattle](#). The Port's enabling statute, from 1911, focused on growth and trade; it understandably did not address the threat of climate change. But by 2012, when the original Century Agenda was written, the dangers of climate change were well established, and we consider that document's silence on this crisis to be a serious oversight. The greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the Agenda's continued promotion of growth now threaten not only the very economic prosperity that the Port seeks to promote, but also the health and welfare of our forests, waters, and residents.

Among many sources for our concern, we draw your attention to the U.W. Climate Impacts Group's 2018 report [No Time to Waste: The IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 C and Implications for Washington State](#). Please note that this refers specifically to Washington State:

If current rates of warming continue, global warming could reach 1.5 C as soon as 2030. Warming is expected to increase the number of very hot days and the chance of both droughts and floods, bring larger and more frequent wildfires to both sides of the Cascades and challenge agriculture through stresses on irrigation supplies and changing pests and diseases. More very hot days are likely to increase hospitalizations, deaths and demand for emergency medical services. Increases in ground-level ozone associated with higher summer temperatures are also expected to increase deaths. Reductions in summer water supply will reduce summer hydropower production and may affect public health through impacts on drinking water quality. More frequent wildfires would reduce air quality, increase hospitalizations related to respiratory conditions and reduce opportunities for outdoor summer recreation. Warming, sea level rise and ocean acidification are expected to stress Washington's coastal communities and fisheries critical to the state's economy and Northwest tribes.

Scientists tell us we must eliminate our carbon emissions as quickly as possible.

The climate crisis cannot be ignored; it calls for a historic shift in priorities. Although it is a high bar and a large ask, it falls to you to reimagine the Port's role and initiate a necessary transition: rather than creating as many jobs as possible through continued expansion and partnerships with climate-destroying industries, we challenge you to draw on your long legacy of leadership to create and promote jobs that nourish a healthy environment.

During our unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the Port is rightfully consulting with public health professionals. Since the climate crisis promises to be far more damaging and longer-lasting than this pandemic, and worse, is likely irreversible, we urge you to be similarly resourceful and responsible, and to consult with climate experts to reformulate the Century Agenda, in order to align the Port's guiding document with science and the needs of the 21st century.

Scientists at the following local institutes conduct research specifically geared toward informing and guiding public policy to avoid the worst effects of climate change; we strongly recommend that you consult with some of these experts before approving changes to the Century Agenda.

- Climate Impacts Group at UW: <https://cig.uw.edu>
- Washington State climatologist Nick Bond: <https://www.climate.washington.edu/>, who is also a senior scientist at the Cooperative Program for Climate, Ocean, and Ecosystem Studies: <https://cicoes.uw.edu/research/atmosphere/>
- Program on Climate Change at UW: <https://pcc.uw.edu/>

We offer the following feedback on specifics of Century Agenda Goals and Strategies:

Goals 1 and 2: We see potential benefit in dropping the numerical objectives regarding growth of seaport container volume, air cargo volume, outbound cargo value, international flight numbers, and the economic value of cruise traffic, because the current objectives mandate growth that makes it difficult or impossible to meet the carbon reduction target in Goal 4, Objective 3c, which deals with scope 3 emissions.

The definition of “sustainable” in Goal 1, Objective 1, must include meeting scope 3 emissions targets.

Sustainability needs to be added to Goal 2, Objective 1; i.e., “Strengthen the competitiveness of SEA in the regional and global marketplace in a sustainable manner,” again with the understanding that this means meeting scope 3 emissions targets.

Goal 4: Given current world circumstances, a new standard to measure “green” is required. Unfortunately, it is possible to be the greenest port in North America and still emit more greenhouse gases than the entire city of Seattle. All public institutions, especially our regional leaders, need to reduce carbon emissions to zero as quickly as possible.

We commend your progress on lowering scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, and appreciate the climate leadership you have demonstrated by sponsoring the Renewable Aviation Fuels Summit and by electrifying waterfront infrastructure. However, achieving Objective 3c requires taking responsibility for the emissions of the ships, planes and vehicles that use the Port. Until there are zero-emissions ships and planes, reducing carbon emissions requires scaling down rather than scaling up shipping, cruises, and flights.

Strategies 5 & 6: We applaud your proposals for new Strategies 5 and 6, but we note that Strategy 6, Objective 1 is compromised by continued scope 3 emissions.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope our comments are helpful and we look forward to supporting you as we face this historic crisis together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Elizabeth Burton elizabeth@nineravens.org

on behalf of:

People for Climate Action - Burien

People for Climate Action - Issaquah

People for Climate Action - Kent

People for Climate Action - Kirkland

People for Climate Action - Mercer Island

People for Climate Action - Redmond

People for Climate Action - Seattle

People for Climate Action - Woodinville

Sustainable Burien