

From: [DOH WSBOH Health Disparities Council](#)
To: [Fernald, Hannah J \(DOH\)](#)
Subject: FW: Written Comment for the Yakima Meeting
Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2019 9:02:00 AM

From: Russell Maier [mailto:russellmaier930@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2019 8:42 PM
To: DOH WSBOH Health Disparities Council <healthequity@sboh.wa.gov>
Cc: Sara Cate <sarairenecate@gmail.com>
Subject: Written Comment for the Yakima Meeting

We appreciate the evening time you offered this week, yet one of us is speaking at another event this evening and the other in the Tri-Cities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comment.

Speaking on behalf of the Yakima Chapter of Citizen's Climate Lobby, an organization with over 300 local members, I would like to note the climate impacts to those citizens in the greater Yakima Valley.

My wife, Sara Cate, MD, MPH, and I both work at a local community health center serving those most in need. We are seeing in our practices, as well as in documented changes, the health effects of climate change.

We are concerned about the air we breath. Worsening asthma and other lung conditions in children and adults from wood smoke in the winter is a well known problem. Now breathing wildfire smoke on a regular basis during the summer with our bigger and more frequent wildfires has given Yakima County the 6th worst air in the country as ranked by the American Lung Association 2019 State of the Air report.

Some individuals work inside, breath filtered air, yet many in our valley have no other choices. Wood is their only source of heat in the winter, and in the summer many must work outside.

Recent research by Dr Mark Baldwin at Pacific Northwest University is showing an increase in kidney disease in Hispanic farmworkers directly related to heat stress.

Increasing severe storms, infectious diseases present over a longer season, more infectious diseases moving further north, and increasing drought will stress those who cannot easily move or migrate to new locations.

The Extreme Heat and Climate calculator at <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/killer-heat-interactive-tool?location=yakima--wa> shows that we will go from 10 to 25 days on average per year with temperatures above 100 degrees

As temperatures rise we will see worsening fires, more extreme temperatures, and

worsening mental health. For those who cannot escape into an air conditioned work place or home, the stresses of climate change are relentless.

But there is much we can do - all of it now with some immediate benefit and great long term benefit.

Providing clean water and sanitation, increased capacity for disaster preparedness and response, public safe places with cool, filtered air-conditioned air, and, most importantly alleviating poverty can protect our population even as temperatures rise.

Further, the Consortium on Climate and Health including members - the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, and American Heart Association joined in a Call to Action to publicly request the US government, business, and elected officials to move quickly to address climate change which is the “greatest threat to the health of America (and the world) and a true public health emergency and to work across government agencies and with communities and businesses to prioritize action on Climate, Health and Equity”.

And lastly, the Lancet Medical Journal notes, *“The single most powerful strategic instrument to inoculate human health against the risks of climate change would be for governments to introduce strong and sustained carbon pricing, in ways pledged to strengthen over time until the problem is brought under control.”*

So here's our bottom line, The greatest long term threat to vulnerable populations in the Yakima Valley is climate change. There are immediate steps to take to improve the health of our vulnerable populations - the basic public health measures of clean water, sanitation, immunizations - and some long term steps. The best long term, market based solution is a carbon fee and dividend, that puts a price on carbon (currently dumped into the air for free), and gives that fee back to all Americans as a dividend.

We are happy to provide citations for any of the information presented here.

Sincerely,

Sara Cate, MD, MPH
Russell Maier, MD