

Environment & Energy

Climate Agreement From West Coast Leaders Emphasizes Equity (1)

By Zach Bright

Oct. 6, 2022, 2:49 PM; Updated: Oct. 6, 2022, 3:32 PM

- Stresses investment in overburdened communities
 - Pledges EV charging, clean ports, improved grid
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California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia agreed Thursday to speed up work to fight climate change, promising protections for places hit by its worsening impacts and equity for those bearing the brunt of pollution.

The governors and premier agreed to support for “an equitable and just transition to a low carbon and climate resilient future, emphasizing investments in overburdened communities,” according to a statement.

To achieve those goals, the leaders in their agreement pledged to expand climate policy and infrastructure—including cleaner electric grids, greener ports, and more electric vehicle charging stations.

West Coast states “understand the success—our cap-and-trade bills, our low-carbon fuel standards, our subsidies for incentivizing access to electric vehicles,” Washington Gov. Jay Inslee (D) said in the announcement. “We are going to lead to continue to the next steps nationally.”

In the statement they signed, the four also sought to work to protect communities and lands especially at risk from droughts, flooding, wildfires, heat waves, ocean acidification and flooding.

California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia first teamed up in 2008, joining a memorandum to create the Pacific Coast Collaborative, which formerly included Alaska. In 2013, the states signed a climate and clean energy policy known as the Pacific Coast Action Plan on Climate and Energy, which was updated in 2016.

Washington state passed a cap-and-trade plan to regulate carbon emissions in 2021, and Oregon adopted its own plan the same year. California codified climate goals in September and the state’s top air agency, the Air Resources Board, adopted in August rules to phase out new gas-powered auto sales by 2035.

The Pacific Coast pact members are led by Inslee and Govs. Gavin Newsom (D) and Kate Brown (D) and Premier John Horgan.

(Updated with quote from Inslee, details on Pacific Coast Collaborative origins.)

To contact the reporter on this story: Zach Bright at zbright@bloombergindustry.com

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Renee Schoof at rschoof@bloombergindustry.com

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