Improving Air Quality in Overburdened Communities Highly Impacted by Air Pollution – an update on rulemaking

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

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For the Environmental Justice Council, July 24, 2025

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

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ii Input and Engagement

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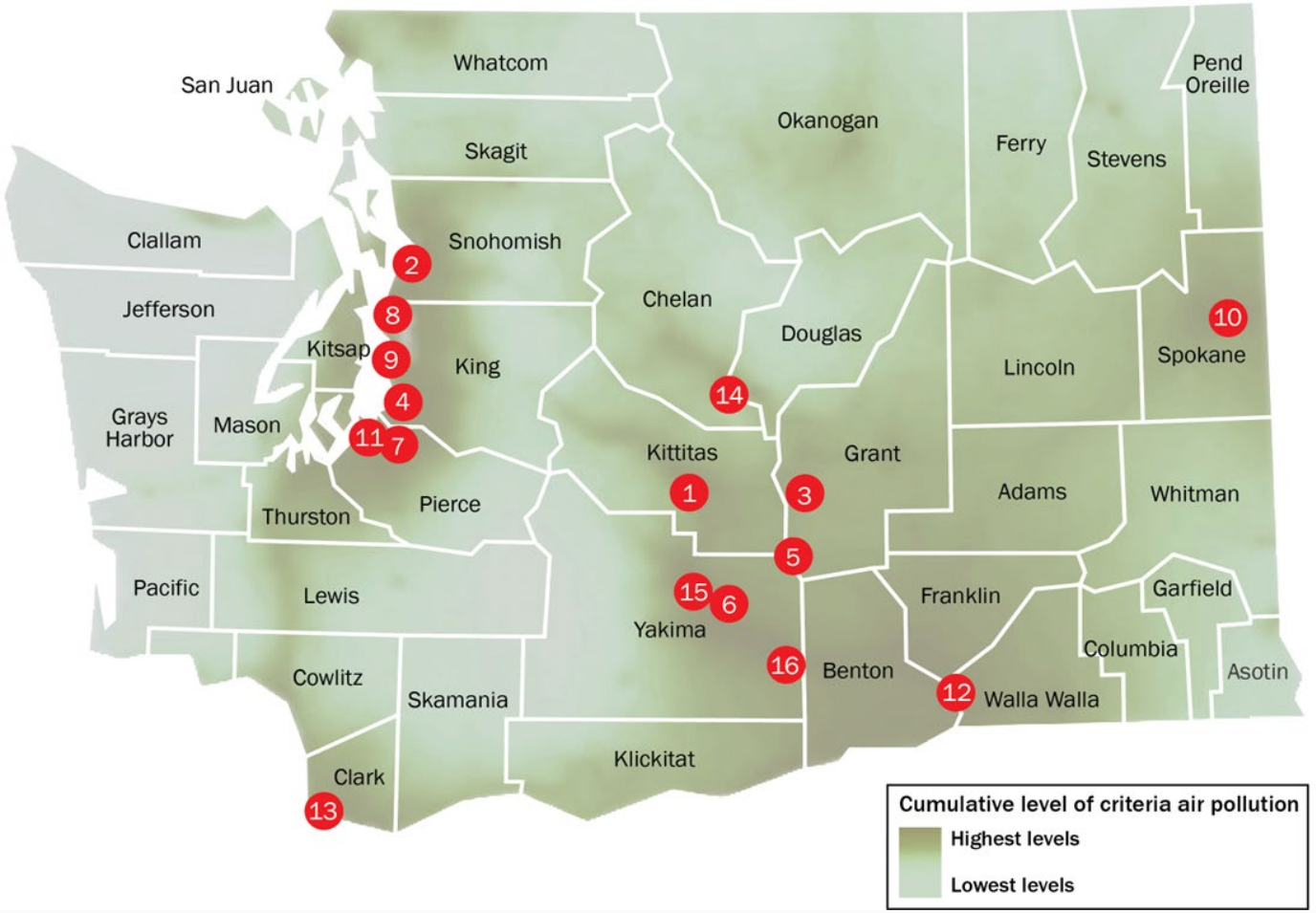
Initiative for Improving Air Quality & Environmental Justice

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

We are engaging with 16 overburdened communities and with Tribes through Government-to-Government consultation

- Expanding air monitoring
  - Includes $10M for high-resolution study
- Adopting strategies to reduce air pollution
  - New community grant program
  - Rulemaking for more protective air quality and emission standards
- Evaluating and reporting air pollution, greenhouse gas, and health data every two years

Ecology identified 16 overburdened communities highly impacted by air pollution



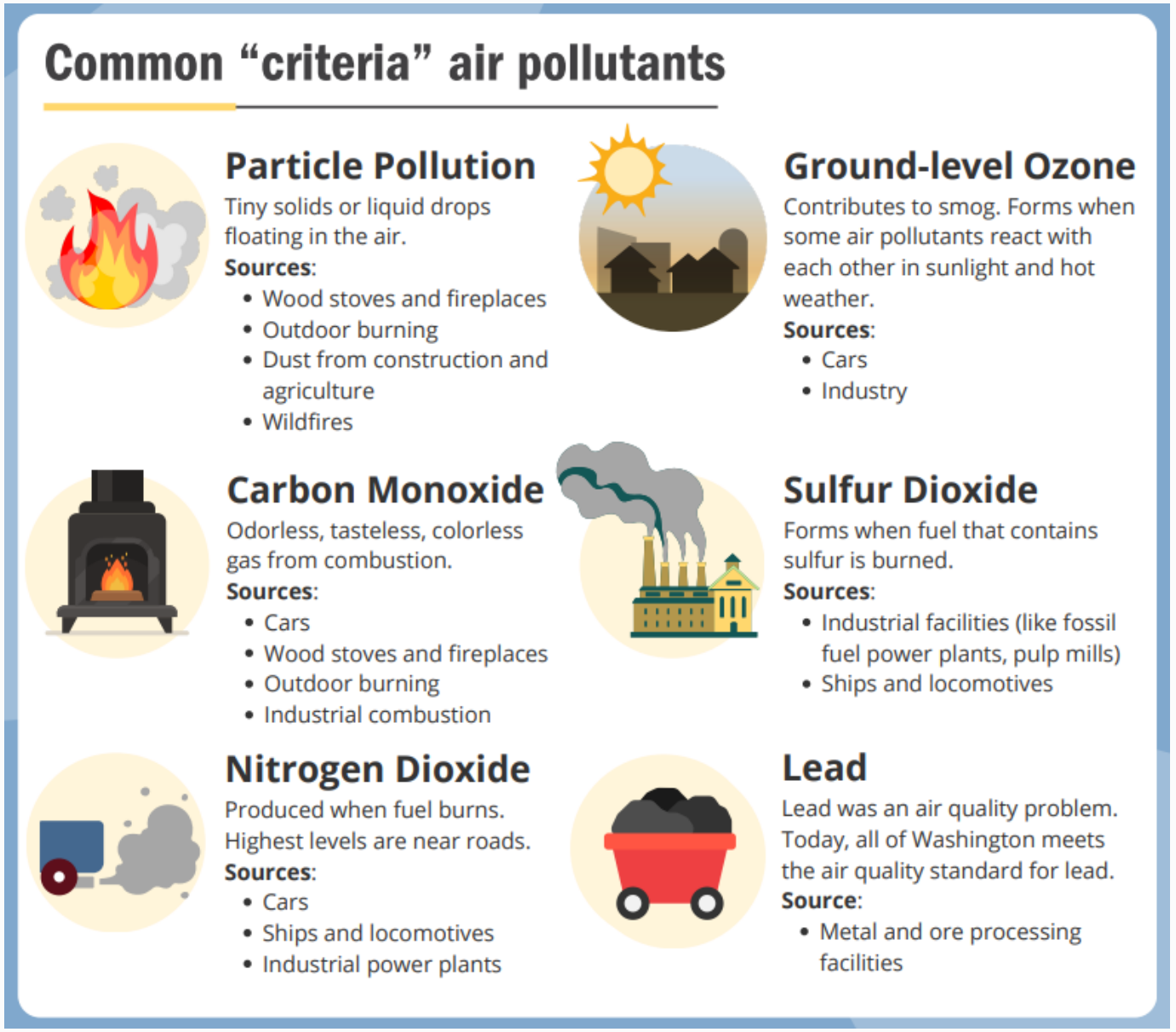
1. Ellensburg
2. Everett
3. George and West Grant County
4. South King County
5. Mattawa
6. Moxee Valley
7. Northeast Puyallup
8. North Seattle and Shoreline
9. South Seattle
10. Spokane and Spokane Valley
11. South and East Tacoma
12. Tri-Cities to Wallula
13. Vancouver
14. Wenatchee and East Wenatchee
15. East Yakima
16. Lower Yakima Valley

Communities listed alphabetically.

This list is intended for the purposes outlined in the environmental justice review section of the Climate Commitment Act.

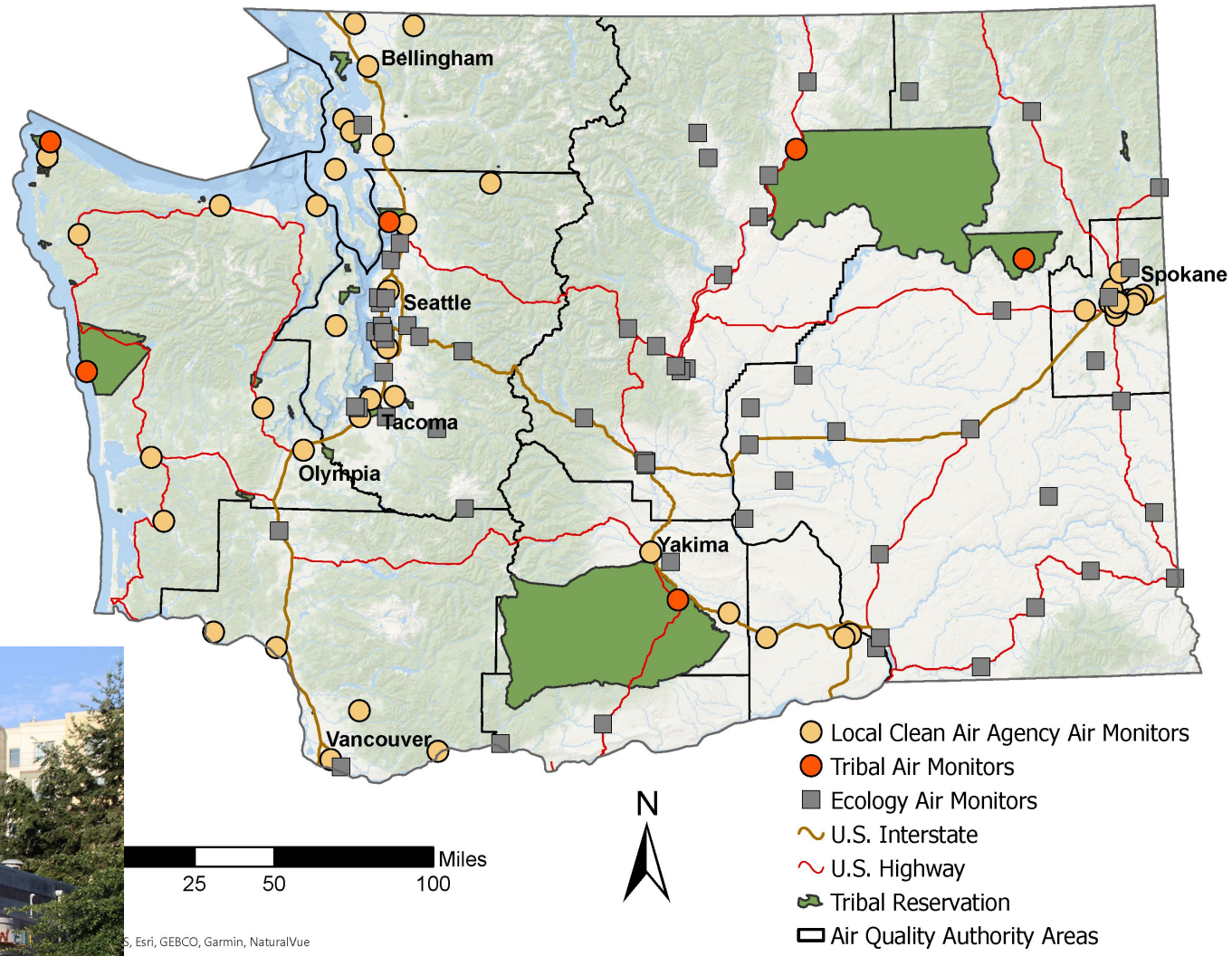
Criteria air pollutants

- Particulate matter
  - —$PM_{2.5}$
  - —PM_{10}
- Ozone (O_3)
- Lead (Pb)
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)
- Sulfur dioxide (SO_2)
- Carbon monoxide (CO)

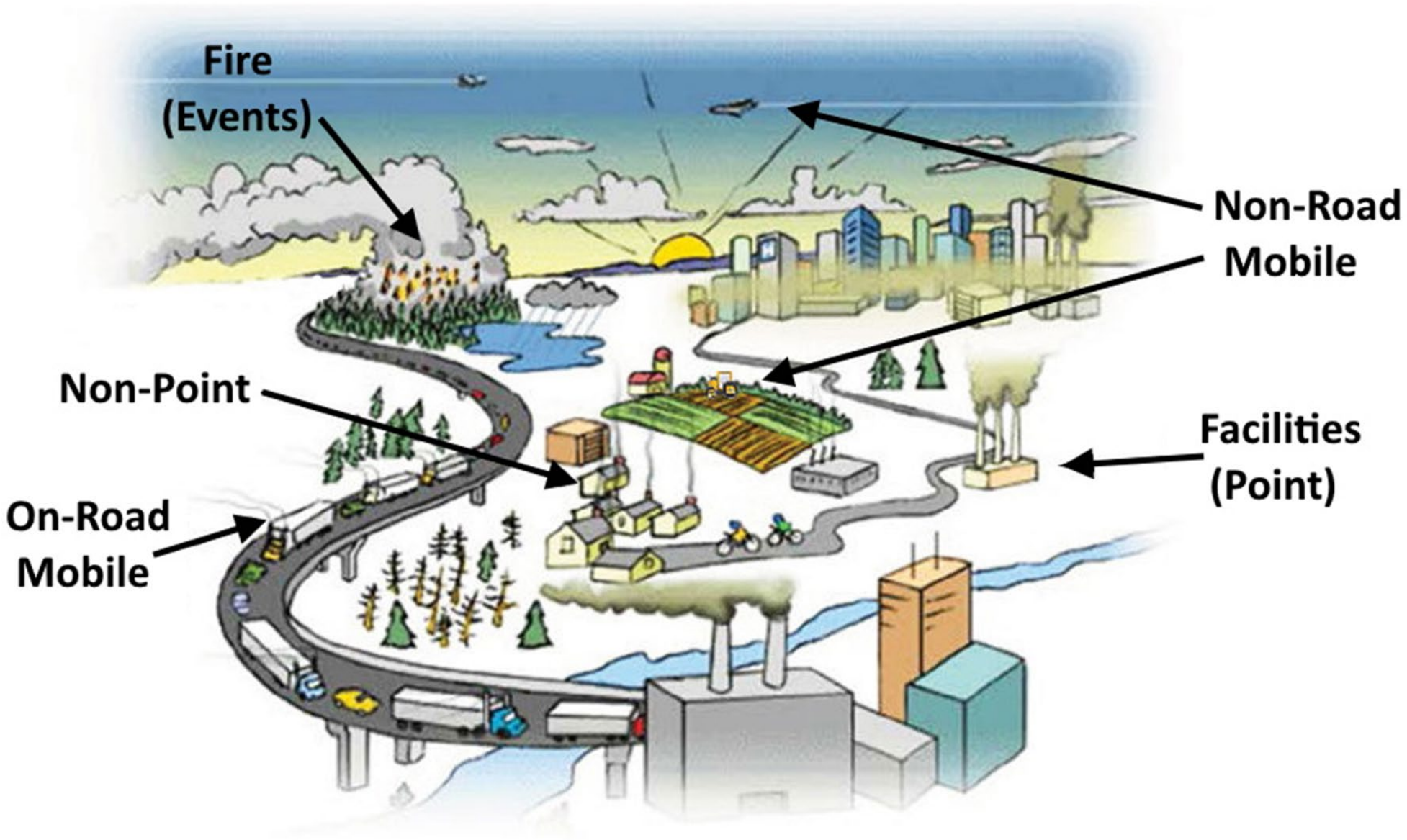


Expanding Washington's air monitoring network

- From 83 to 121 sites across WA
- Monitors in all 16 overburdened communities



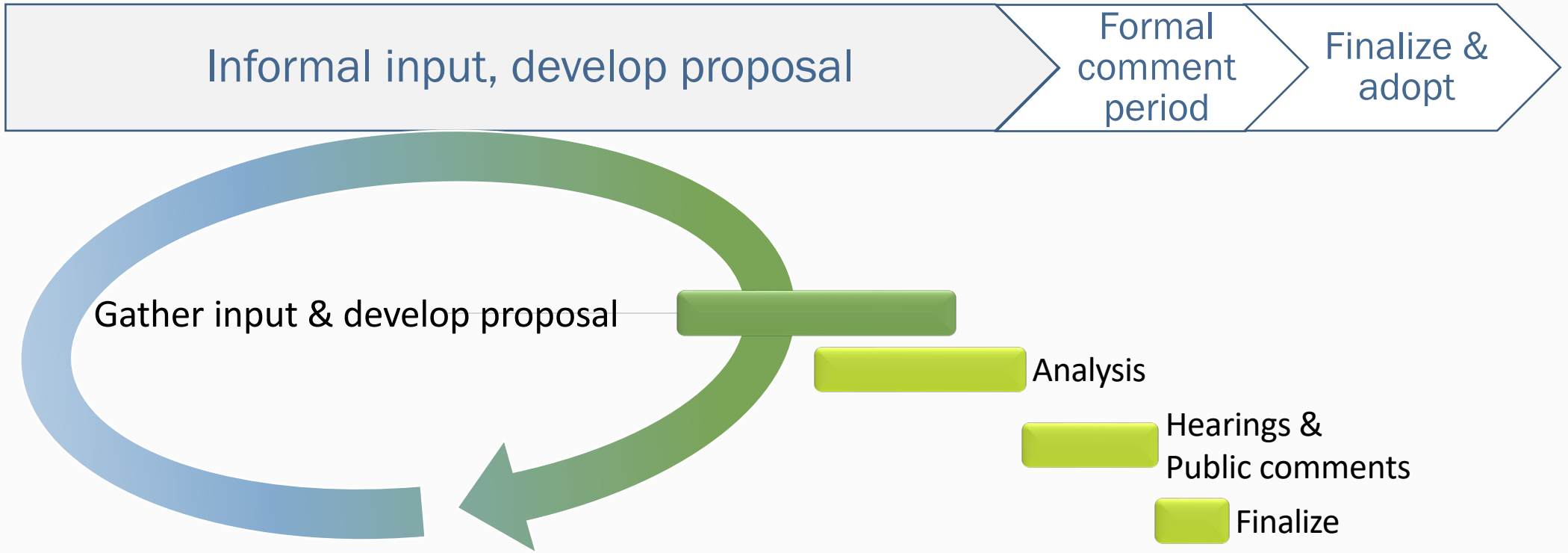
Many different sources of air pollution



Rulemaking is one component of the initiative to improve air quality

A goal of this rulemaking is stricter standards and reducing emissions of criteria pollutants to reach air quality targets.

The rulemaking process



Announce rulemaking

Publish proposal

Adopt new rule

2024 2025 2026

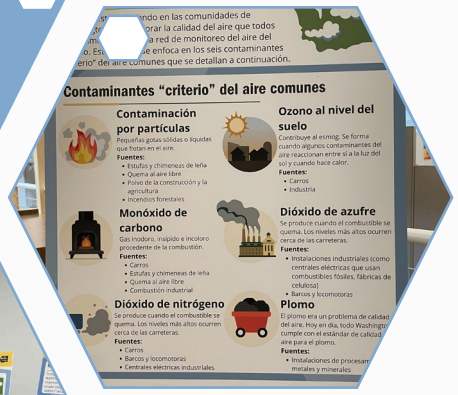
Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep

2026

Listening and engaging

Virtual workshops

Welcoming questions



Informal comment periods

Listening

Surveys

Tables at community events

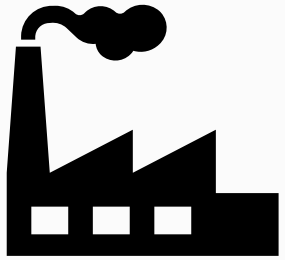
Empowering communities to have a voice

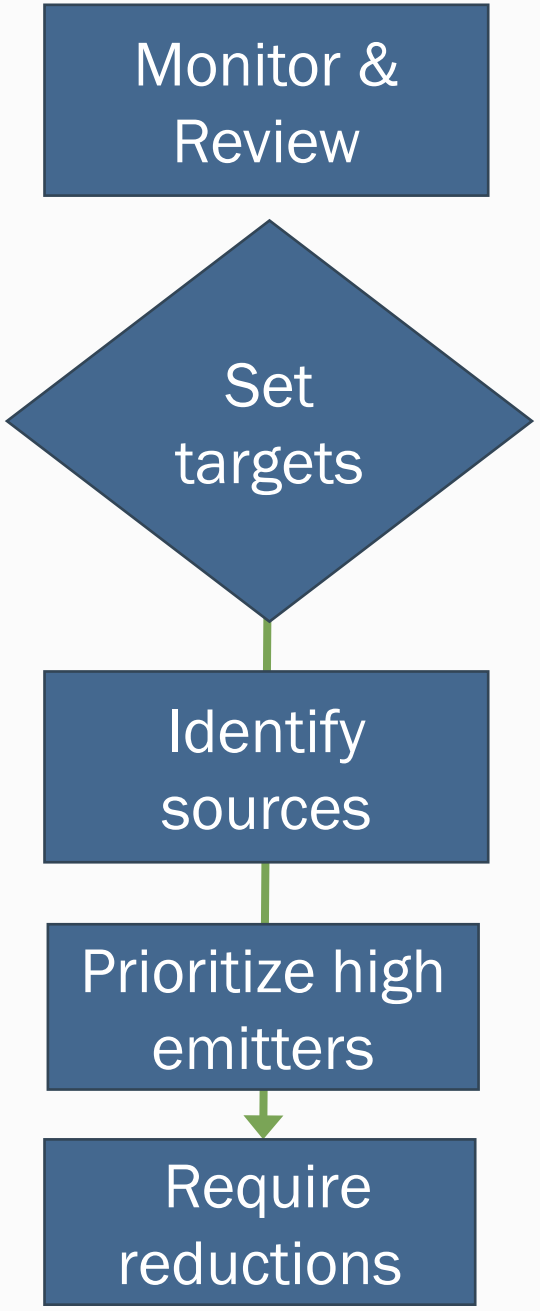
Where & what	What we are hearing	How & what it's influencing
Virtual Workshops Presentations and discussions on • Options for setting air quality targets based on neighboring communities. • Options and data to determine the greatest contributors to air pollution. — WA comprehensive emission inventory — Emissions reported by permittees	• More monitoring data needed • Monitor locations matter • Regional averaging approach not optimal • Each community is unique • Lots of questions about data • Address localized effects • Wildfire smoke in summer/woodsmoke in winter	➢ A tiered approach that prefers complete data sets, anticipates an expanding monitoring network, and includes provisions for using what is available ➢ Creating community-specific emission inventories using comprehensive emission inventory data evaluated to consider community-scale effects ➢ Reduction strategies based on source type, terrain, seasonal variation
Written informal comments • Easy to use web form	• Rely on science • Set protective standards • Review and update assumptions	➢ Account for contribution of area sources ➢ Align with complementary reporting timelines, frequencies
Community events • We offer information and speak to people who stop by Ecology tables • Demonstrate SensWA low-cost air monitors	• Lots of interest in monitors and how they work • Some teachers particularly excited about potential connections to science lessons	➢ Characterizing air quality using data from monitors located in the community ➢ Community input to help identify good monitor sites ➢ Scientific information clearly presented
Surveys • Your concerns about air in your community?	• Large industrial polluters • Traffic, smoke, trains	➢ Public input on prioritizing significant emitters

We are addressing

Who is required to reduce their emissions and by how much

Stricter standards & where they apply





Rule Outline (tentative)

I. Applicability
II. Definitions
III. Methods for identifying and categorizing sources of criteria air pollution
IV. Process for determining greatest contributors
V. Process for identifying and listing high priority significant emitters
VI. Methods for establishing targets
VII. Acceptable emission control strategies standards
VIII. Enforcement orders (standards and limits)

What we are hearing

Written comments include detailed recommendations

"We advocate that Ecology set stronger health protective air quality targets in designated overburdened communities. We propose emission control measures, and other methods to reach air quality targets, and we make recommendations on how Ecology can improve its methodology for designating overburdened communities and assessing air quality within those communities."

- Additional public workshops
- Health-protective targets
- Control pollution from stationary sources
- Emission controls for mobile sources (ports, heavy-duty trucks)
- Consider mobile sources when assessing project impacts
- Cumulative impacts

What we are hearing

Written comments include technical questions

"What methodology will be used to differentiate between locally generated emissions and those transported from external sources (e.g., wildfires or neighboring states)?"

"How will the public and regulated entities access real-time air quality data from expanded monitoring sites, and what assurances are in place that such data will be reliable?"

"How will [stricter air quality standards and alternative mitigation actions] be assessed for economic feasibility and effectiveness?"

Tentative Timeline for Rulemaking

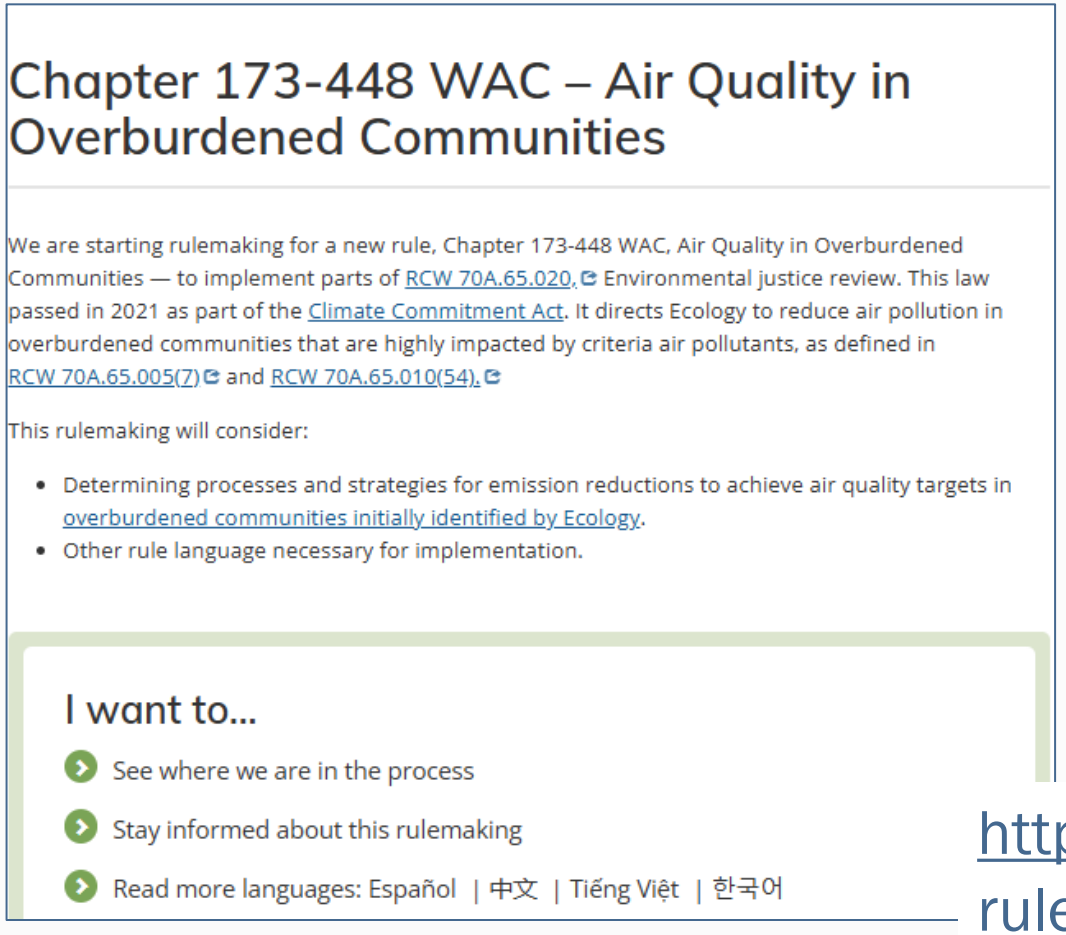
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Public Workshops 1. Overview and introduction 2. Sources of air pollution 3. Air quality targets 4. Reducing emissions Consulting with Local Air Agencies						☆						
					Developing preliminary review draft							
								45-day Informal public review period				
								-Q&A Sessions -Tribal forum		Ecology revises based on public input		

Looking ahead to 2026

- Informational webinar
- Incorporating input
- EJ Assessment
- Regulatory analyses (Cost/Benefit, etc.)
- Formal proposal
- Comment period
- Public hearing
- Formal response to comments

EJ Council review of preliminary & revised drafts early 2026

Rulemaking website



Chapter 173-448 WAC – Air Quality in Overburdened Communities

We are starting rulemaking for a new rule, Chapter 173-448 WAC, Air Quality in Overburdened Communities — to implement parts of RCW 70A.65.020, Environmental justice review. This law passed in 2021 as part of the Climate Commitment Act. It directs Ecology to reduce air pollution in overburdened communities that are highly impacted by criteria air pollutants, as defined in RCW 70A.65.005(7) and RCW 70A.65.010(54).

This rulemaking will consider:

- Determining processes and strategies for emission reductions to achieve air quality targets in overburdened communities initially identified by Ecology.
- Other rule language necessary for implementation.

I want to...

- See where we are in the process
- Stay informed about this rulemaking
- Read more languages: Español | 中文 | Tiếng Việt | 한국어

- Timeline
- Links to related material
- Public input and involvement
- Presentations & webinar recordings
- Language access
- Submit comments
- Contact info

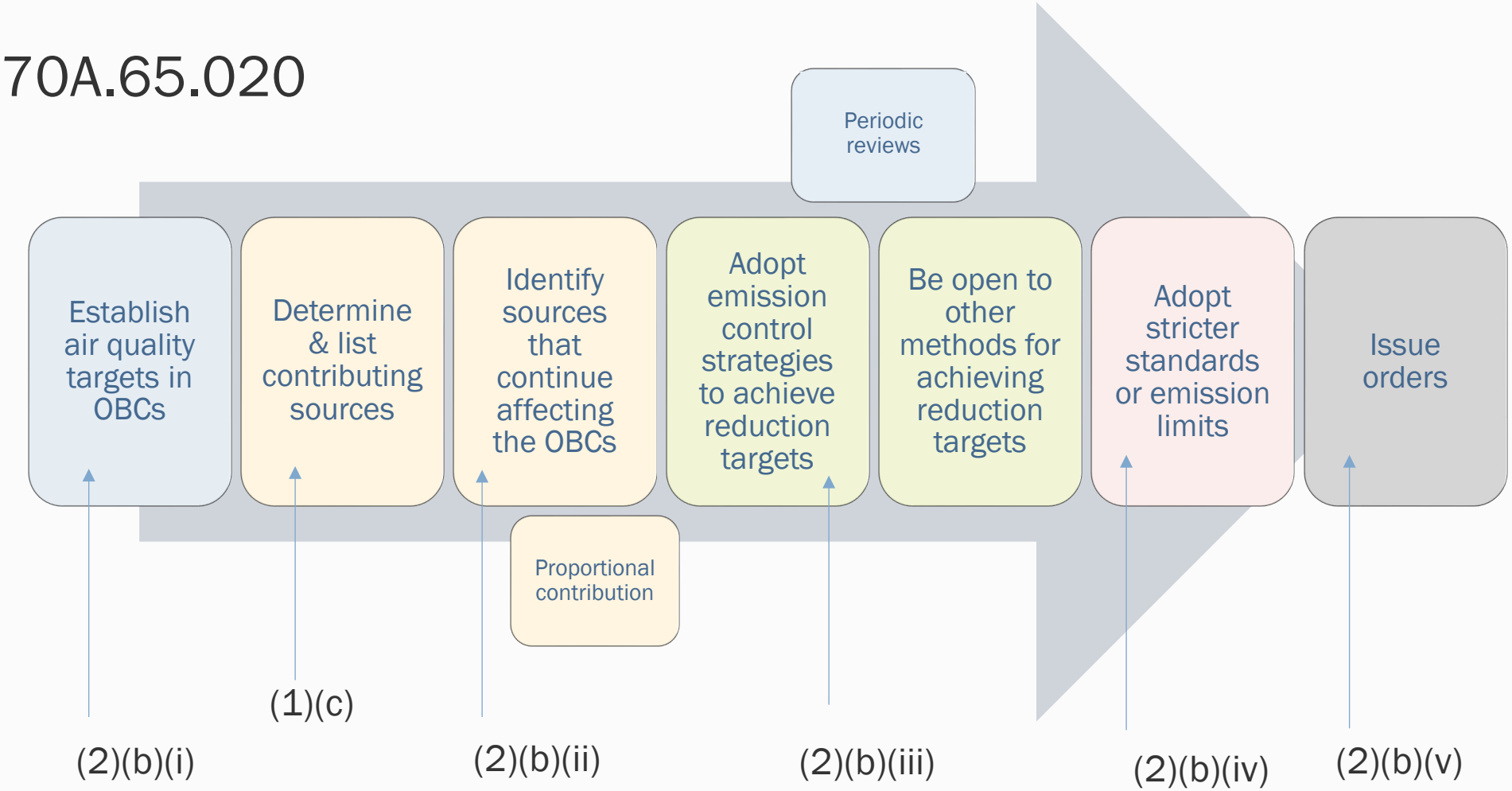
https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/laws-rules-rulemaking/rulemaking/wac-173-448

Thank you

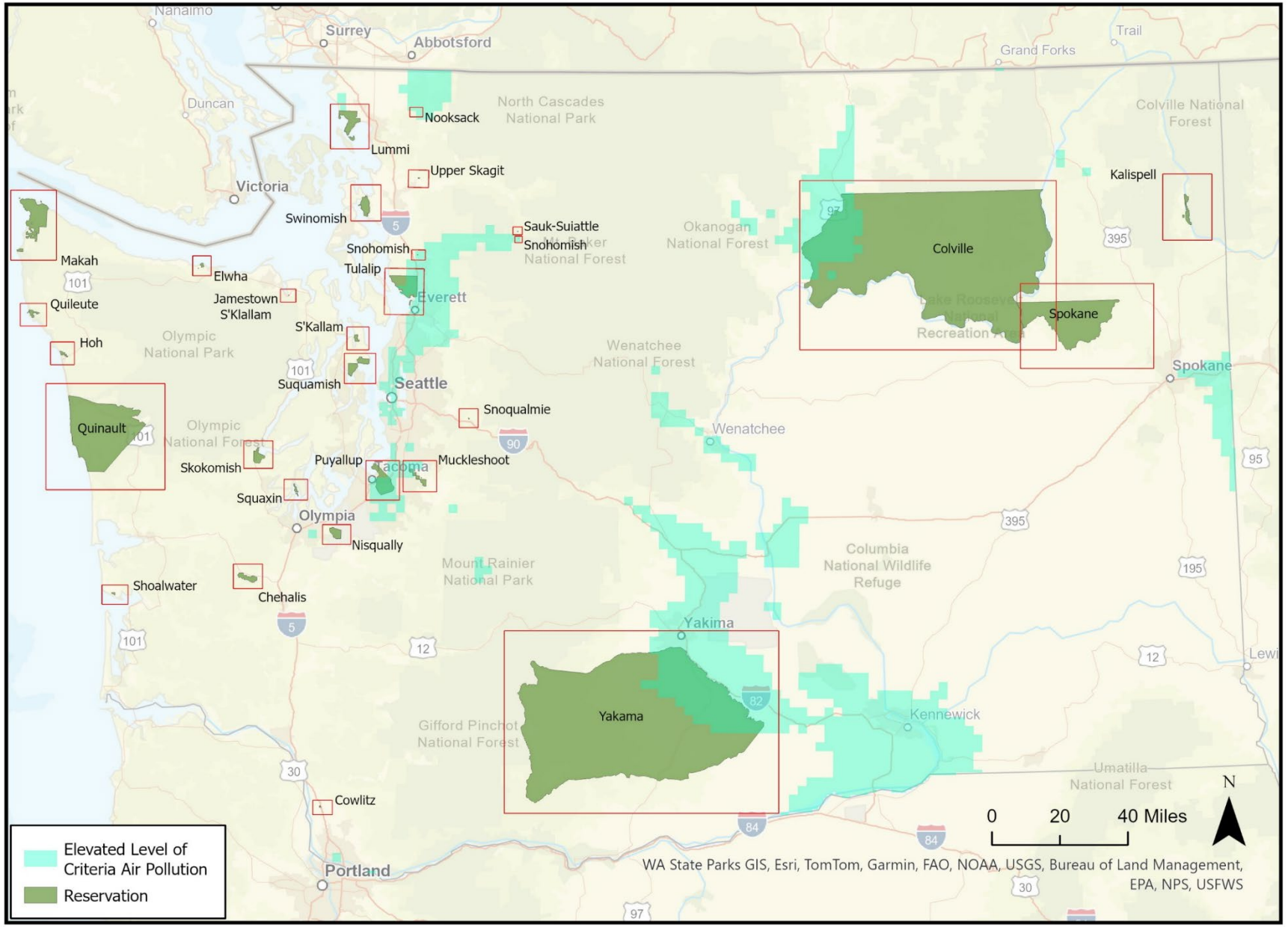
Extra slides

Statutory direction

RCW 70A.65.020

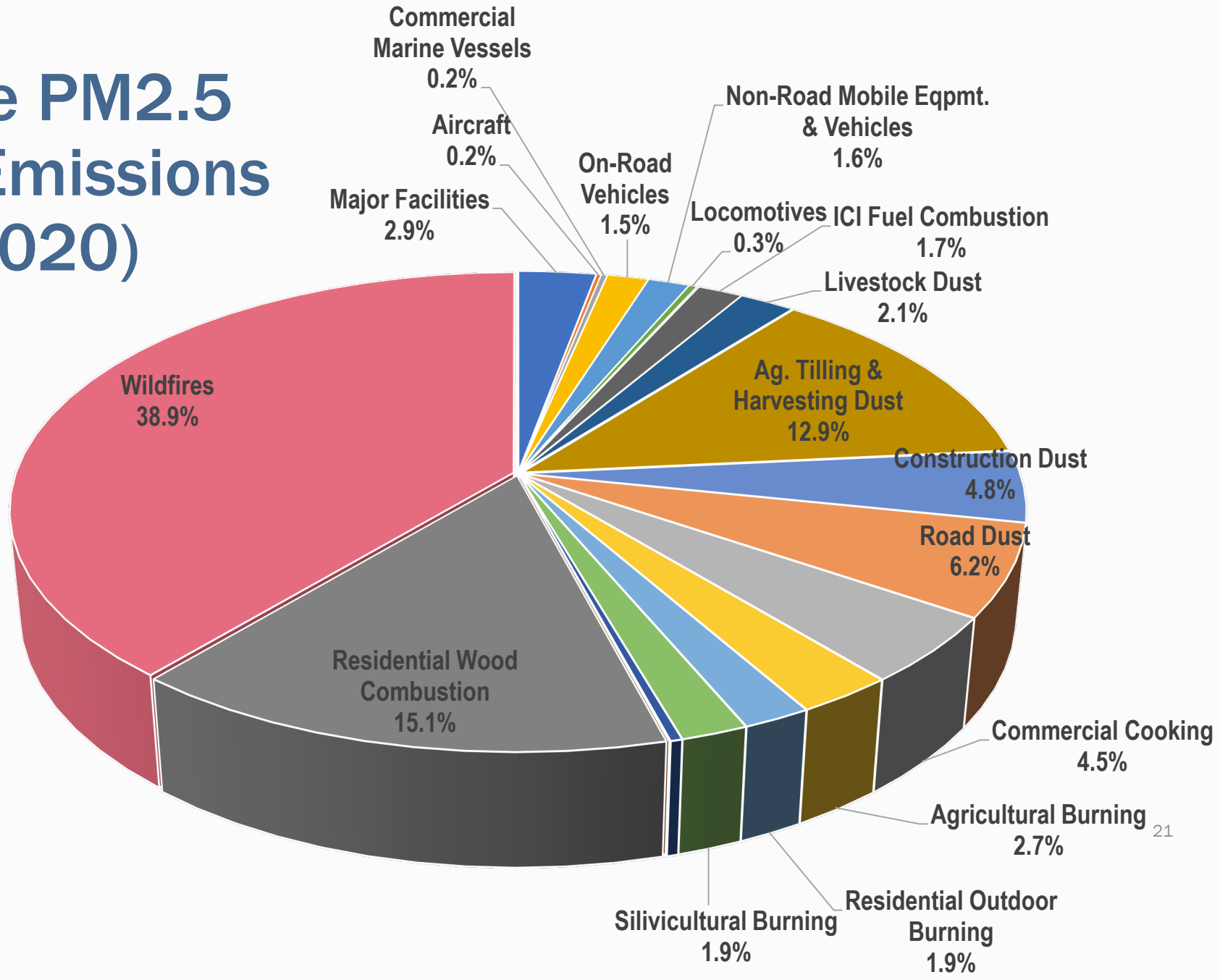


Tribes Highly Impacted by Criteria Air Pollutants



- Confederated Bands and Tribes of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Nooksack Indian Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
- Tulalip Tribes

WA State PM2.5 Annual Emissions Totals (2020)



Fine particulates are the primary cause of air pollution related adverse health effects across Washington.

Sources

- Wood stoves and fireplaces
- Vehicles
- Dust
- Outdoor burning
- Industrial facilities
- Wildfires