

Environmental Justice Council

Date: October 26, 2026

To: Environmental Justice Council

From: Christy Curwick Hoff, Policy Advisor

Subject: Potential Additional Budget Recommendation

Background

Air Quality and Health Disparities Improvement Account (AQHDIA)

In 2021, [Senate Bill 5126](#) (SB 5126), which established the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), included legislative intent to dedicate not less than \$20 million per biennium to the Air Quality and Health Disparities Improvement Account (AQHDIA). Dedicated funding in the AQHDIA was intended to reduce criteria air pollutants, establish emissions data, monitor and improve air quality in overburdened communities, address environmental harms while promoting environmental benefits, and improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities.

In 2026, the passage of [House Bill 2251](#) (HB 2251) made significant changes to the CCA accounts and the amount of revenue deposited into each, including removing the legislative intent to dedicate funding to the AQHDIA (in Section 5).

Improving Air Quality in Overburdened Communities Initiative (AQ OBC Initiative)

The [AQ OBC Initiative](#) works to improve air quality in 16 Washington communities and participating Tribes that are highly impacted by criteria air pollution and are overburdened with health, social, and environmental inequities. The Initiative administers grants to engage

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community members to design and implement locally-led projects that reduce criteria air pollution. This grant program, which was funded through AQHDIA, was funded at \$11.4 million during the 2023-2025 biennium. All the funding was awarded to 24 projects (see page 265 in [27-29CapitalRequest.pdf](#)) located in 12 communities and 2 Tribes—projects will be complete by June 2027. As examples, some projects have focused on reducing emissions from transportation, burning, and dust. Ecology has noted the following examples of accomplishments to date:

- 568 bikes and e-bikes distributed
- 38 electric tools purchased
- 7 vehicles/large equipment items purchased
- 762 portable air cleaners distributed
- 25 public transportation passes distribute

The AQ OBC Initiative received a reappropriation of \$19,374,000 in the 2026 supplemental capital budget ([6003-S.SL.pdf](#)) from AQHDIA.

Department of Ecology’s 2027-2029 Capital Budget Decision Package (Budget Request)

The Department of Ecology has submitted a 2027-2029 capital [budget request](#) (see project #40000776 starting on page 247) to implement a second round of funding for the AQ OBC Initiative grant program. Ecology is requesting \$14 million for the 2027-2029 biennium. The agency is requesting that \$14 million be transferred from the CCA Capital Account into the AQHDIA to support the budget request and ensure the AQHDIA maintains a positive cash and fund balance through the 2027-2029 biennium. Ecology’s proposal indicates the agency plans to request \$14 million each biennium through 2035-2037. Ecology plans to design the requested grant program and projects in coordination with people from overburdened communities.

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Additionally, Ecology's 2027-2029 capital [budget request](#) (see project #40000606 starting on page 997) to the Governor also includes a reappropriation of \$13,354,000 from the AQHDIA to continue the original Air Quality OBC grant program and other OBC work that includes Air Quality's High Resolution Mobile Monitoring study contract.

Council Authority

Under [RCW 70A.65.040](#), the Environmental Justice Council (Council) has the authority and responsibility to provide recommendations on which program should be funded by CCA revenue.

Potential Budget Recommendation

The Council's Executive Committee has discussed and voiced concerns about the removal of legislative intent to automatically deposit CCA revenue into AQHDIA. Executive Committee members want to raise this issue with the full Council at today's meeting and request that the Budget Workgroup meet to discuss and consider bringing a budget recommendation to the Legislature for the full Council to consider at the December meeting.

Staff Contact

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