



December 18, 2017

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**RE: COMMENTS ON WASHINGTON’S DRAFT MITIGATION PLAN (VOLKSWAGEN MITIGATION FUND)**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) on its draft mitigation plan for projects to be funded by the Volkswagen (VW) Environmental Mitigation Fund. EDF is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental environmental organization that combines law, policy, science, and economics to find solutions to today’s most pressing environmental problems.

**II. PROPOSED FUNDING ALLOCATIONS**

Ecology has proposed to allocate the anticipated \$112.7 million that Washington is expected to receive from the VW Environmental Mitigation Fund for the following:

- **Marine Repowers (up to 45%; prioritizing electrification of public vessels, especially ferries).** Washington’s ferry system transported more than 26 million passengers and more than 11 million vehicles in 2015<sup>1</sup>, and the state is home to several of the largest seaports in the country that rely on the services of assist tugs, pushboats, and other tug operations. This marine sector is a critical sector to address, as ferries and tugs frequently have very old engines (20-40 years old) that are (legally) rebuilt by owners/operators instead of repowered or replaced. The age of these engines, the high horsepower, and the typical high annual usage of these engines make marine sources disproportionately high emitters when compared to an on-road vehicle or a nonroad piece of equipment. In other words, these types of projects can be very cost-effective and should be prioritized because the engines are not turning over to cleaner engines as quickly as other sectors. Washington is also proposing to prioritize electrification projects, which have the potential to be truly transformational for the marine sector in general, as well as for the state. Projects identified for funding under the VW Environmental Mitigation Fund must be implemented within a ten-year time period, providing the state with the opportunity to carefully consider ideal applications for deploying electric vessels, such as route length, route

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cms.bts.dot.gov/sites/bts.dot.gov/files/docs/browse-statistical-products-and-data/surveys/national-census-ferry-operators-ncfo/210441/ferry-operators-highlights-2016.pdf>

characteristics, and the potential for opportunistic charging. *EDF supports using this important funding for ferry and tug projects that provide large emission reductions, as well as accelerate the commercialization of zero-emission vessels.*

- **On-Road Heavy-Duty Vehicles (up to 45%; prioritizing public fleets, especially public fleets and transit buses).** In Washington, the on-road mobile sector is primarily responsible for both fine particulates (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>)<sup>2</sup>. Ecology proposes to prioritize funding for transit buses and heavy-duty trucks. For these sources, it would be ideal for Washington to ensure that other available funding is strategically leveraged, such as Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants and private sector funding, to help make VW funds go as far as possible. For other types of on-road, heavy-duty projects, Ecology should consider the potential emission reductions (i.e., prioritize high usage, high gross-vehicle-weight-rating vehicles over lower usage, smaller vehicles), as well as other factors such as community impacts and environmental justice. For example, older school buses can be particularly dangerous for schoolchildren because of a variety of factors, ranging from increased respiration rates for children and open crankcases that allow exhaust gases to enter the interior of the bus. In addition, drayage trucks (which are often the oldest, dirtiest trucks calling at ports<sup>3</sup>) that drive through neighborhoods may be idling or transiting near sensitive receptors such as schools, nursing homes, or hospitals. Projects that support deployment of all electric technologies, especially in the heavy-duty sector, will help prove these technologies to the market, as well as eliminate tailpipe combustion. *EDF supports using this important funding for on-road, heavy-duty projects that will provide needed emission reductions, especially in environmental justice communities.*

In addition to the priorities above, EDF encourages Ecology to consider funding port electrification projects for cargo-handling equipment (CHE), *especially in the highest usage and horsepower categories.* Twenty deepwater and barge ports in Washington support goods movement activities relying on diesel CHE that could reduce emissions through replacement or repower to zero-emission technologies.

### III. CONCLUSION

EDF appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to Ecology on the proposed plan for spending Washington's VW Environmental Mitigation funds. This funding provides a unique opportunity that can be used to meet public health emission reduction goals from NO<sub>x</sub>, PM, and climate pollutants such as carbon dioxide and black carbon, while advancing the state of clean technology. If you have any questions, please contact Chris Wolfe at [cwolfe@edf.org](mailto:cwolfe@edf.org) or 512-691-3416.

Sincerely,



Chris Wolfe  
Manager, Air Quality, Port and Freight Facilities

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ecy.wa.gov/DOE/files/41/417a6510-a669-4a10-927d-4ebc02282f4a.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/content/transportation\\_research\\_part\\_d.pdf](https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/content/transportation_research_part_d.pdf)