

Sharron Coontz

The Regional Haze Rule (RHR) is a very powerful tool to achieve clean air and other co-benefits, when well implemented. Used to its fullest potential, the rule can bring clean air protections to Washington national parks, wilderness areas and communities. The very same pollutants that degrade views in Olympic and Mount Rainer national parks have significant respiratory and cardiovascular health impacts in many of our communities, and cause harm to fish, vegetation, and birds.

Considering Ecology's understanding of the RHR's importance and significance, I am incredibly concerned that you may be working toward not requiring any emission controls during this round of the Regional Haze process for refineries, smelters, glass facilities, or the pulp and paper industry. Avoiding emission controls for these haze-polluting facilities that also drive other air and climate problems is unacceptable.

We are at a moment in history where inaction is irresponsible. We know that many sources of pollution are harming air quality in Washington's protected parks and wilderness areas, driving climate change and causing environmental injustices in communities that have borne the brunt of pollution for far too long. The Regional Haze Rule is the current best opportunity for Ecology and the state of Washington to make good on its promises to be a leader on these issues. I urge you, please, do not delay or avoid requirements of air pollution controls for haze-polluting facilities.