

Isaac Olson

I fully support implementing a cap-and-invest system in Washington state as it would allow for direct mitigative and adaptive actions to be taken in a way that continues to stimulate the economy, in addition to ensuring all money received is diverted to sources that continue to fight climate change and its impacts. The focus on environmental justice through a panel and separate projects is vitally important to me as a multiracial, young environmentalist. I know firsthand the disparate and lasting effects climate change will have on the historically disadvantaged and the lowest contributors to climate change, including increased risk of sickness, property and income loss, and even death from natural disasters and pervasive negative impacts of climate change. I sincerely hope that true representation of all minority groups, especially the traditionally sidelined Indigenous activists, is included in the implementation of this plan, not just in its text. Additionally, while I fully support the core of the actions being taken, I wholeheartedly believe that action against climate change must be pushed further. The cap-and-invest program currently holds exceptions for major emitters including aircraft producers and coal-powered electricity plants. Although there are valid reasons why these exceptions have been proposed, including promoting the state economy in the case of airplane industries and the decline of fossil-fuel plants, it is not ethical or effective to allow the largest emitters to act uninhibited. We have seen that changes in the economy, whether that be oil shortages and high-electricity projects such as mining cryptocurrency lead to the promotion of fossil fuel plants even when they are on the verge of shutting down. If these industries are allowed to emit unregulated by cap-and-invest, it can cause irreparable damage to current and future generations, with unequal inter generational impacts falling on myself and my generation. It is thus imperative to directly condemn these emitters and promote sustainable energy and fuel sources, including solar and wind energy and energy reductions as we work to divest from the few fossil fuel-based power plants remaining in the state, and in sustainable innovations like biofuels, electric planes, and reductions in trips in the airline industry. Washington has traditionally been seen as a leader in the fight against climate change, and its actions have been comparative progressive to much of the country, but we still lack behind several states such as California who has had a robust cap-and-trade system implemented for years and other nations that have the desire and capability to take more prominent actions. If Washington takes large-scale actions now, it will finally live up to its perception as a pioneer in the field of climate change action, while protecting its long-term economic security despite initial costs, and most importantly, protecting the life, liberty, security, and happiness of its current and future residents. I sincerely hope that Washington lawmakers continue to promote this style of action, but commit even further, for the sake of our future.