

March 30, 2021



Ms. Fran Sant  
Department of Ecology  
300 Desmond Drive SE  
Lacey, WA 98503

**RE: Rulemaking for Chapter 173-445 WAC – Greenhouse Gas Assessment for Projects (GAP)**

Dear Ms. Sant:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments during the ongoing CR-101 phase for the Greenhouse Gas Assessment for Projects, WAC 173-445, rulemaking process. The Port of Seattle (Port) is writing to support a rule that provides a clear and consistent greenhouse gas emission protocol that can be utilized by lead agencies for State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review.

Founded in 1911, the Port of Seattle is a special-purpose municipal corporation serving the residents of King County; its mission is to create good jobs here and across Washington state by advancing trade and commerce, promoting manufacturing and maritime growth, and stimulating economic development. Among its responsibilities is the operation of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) and of major maritime facilities ranging from cruise operations to commercial and recreational fishing.

As a public sector entity, we are committed to creating opportunity for all, stewarding our environment responsibly, partnering with surrounding communities, promoting social responsibility, conducting ourselves transparently, and holding ourselves accountable. As part of our Century Agenda, the Port of Seattle is committed to be the greenest and most energy efficient port in North America. Goals include reduction of air pollutants and carbon emissions and meeting all increased energy needs through conservation and renewable resources.

In 2007, we helped establish the Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy (NWPCAS), which has become a foundational partnership between Port of Tacoma, Port of Vancouver, BC, Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), and each nation's regulators and community groups. As of our most recent Puget Sound Air Emissions Inventory for the year 2016, which tracks the Puget Sound-wide maritime emissions addressed by the NWPCAS, the participating ports achieved the NWPCAS 2020 targets several years early and reduced greenhouse gas emissions 17 percent and diesel particulate matter 80 percent, per metric ton of cargo moved. Port of Seattle also conducts annual emission inventories to track those emissions under its direct and indirect control—from its owned and leased buildings, facilities, and from fleets and employee commuting for example. Additionally, in 2014, SEA became the first airport in North America to receive Airport Carbon Accreditation and has demonstrated greenhouse gas emission reductions through this accreditation in each subsequent year.

The Port of Seattle supports the general purpose of the GAP rulemaking, but echoes the Washington Public Port Association's and lower Columbia River ports' concerns on the draft language of this rule and the need for a

clear, transferable and effective process by which all projects can systematically and scientifically account for greenhouse gas emissions through SEPA review. It is imperative that this rule set clear procedures, boundaries (e.g. sector specific as maritime and aviation), and thresholds for analysis, particularly in how direct and lifecycle emissions are quantified and distinguished and how lead agencies would utilize this information for SEPA review. We reiterate the request that Ecology create working groups during the drafting of the rule language to identify and resolve concerns and gaps prior to issuance of the draft language. In addition to the comments contained in the above-referenced port letters, the Port of Seattle requests the rulemaking address the following items:

**Alternative fuels and new technologies.** The Port is committed to investments in clean energy sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the state's reliance on fossil fuels. Providing access to low carbon fuels, such as sustainable aviation fuel, green hydrogen, renewable diesel, or renewable natural gas, is critical to the Port's and our tenants' emission reduction goals. Enabling drop-in fuels or other technologies may require access to or integration with existing fossil fuel infrastructure across the distribution chain. For example, before SEA can rebuild its central mechanical plant, it can utilize renewable natural gas and the existing fossil fuel infrastructure to meet the Century Agenda goal of 50% emissions reduction compared to 2005. The Port requests the rulemaking support these alternative fuels and technologies and provide a pathway for their evaluation and use.

**Existing Emission Reduction Plans.** The Port of Seattle, like other Washington ports, has emission reduction plans for its operations, which include both the seaport and airport. For example, at SEA Airport, the Scope 1 & 2 emissions have been reduced 50% compared to 2005, and the Scope 3 emissions have been reduced by thousands of metric tons through electrification efforts for aircraft and associated equipment. Additionally, Port of Seattle and the other participating Northwest ports are updating the NWPCAS for 2020 to include a bold new vision, joint objectives and actions, and annual reporting metrics to transition to zero-emission operations by 2050. Annually, for its own emissions, and every five years on a Puget Sound-wide basis, the seaports update air emissions inventories to track and analyze progress toward port-specific greenhouse gas reduction targets. This same effort is completed annually at SEA Airport. The Port requests that Ecology's rule allow for the consideration of existing plans, programs, inventories, and targets as a way to analyze emission impacts of discrete projects against broader emission reduction achievements and goals, as well as project-specific mitigation, as part of the context for significance determinations and in other appropriate contexts.

**Sufficient time for comment on the final rule.** Given the significance of the issues and the scope of the proposed rule, the Port of Seattle expects Ecology to provide substantial advance notice of any formal comment period on the proposed rule, and only after Ecology has provided (and vetted) the complete text with key stakeholders, including industries affected. Given the complexity of these issues, we ask Ecology to provide a minimum of ninety days for formal comment to give affected parties a reasonable opportunity to review and understand the proposed rule and to consult with appropriate experts to assist with evaluation of the proposed rule, so that we can offer constructive and effective suggestions for rulemaking.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this rulemaking process, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like additional information. The Port of Seattle would be a welcome participant in any future working group on the rule language. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue and other relevant policies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Leavitt". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a prominent vertical stroke on the right side.

Elizabeth Leavitt  
Senior Director, Engineering, Environment & Sustainability  
Port of Seattle