

Earthjustice

Thank you, as Diane mentioned my name's Amanda Goodin and I'm an attorney with Earthjustice. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments today. Mitigation is one of the most critical components of the GAP rule. And that's because if we are going to consider allowing a major new source of greenhouse gas emissions in this state, mitigation is the only way we can ensure that we are [inaudible] not for unsustainable levels of warming. So, with that in mind, the mitigation requirements of this rule must be as complete and as rigorous as we can possibly make them. I want to touch on a few key points relating to mitigation today and I expect that we will follow up on these points and others with additional written feedback. First, equity has to be front and center as mitigation is developed for each specific project. A mitigation plan that mitigates for the greenhouse gas emissions of a project, but leaves overburdened communities with the other negative impacts of the project, climate change is simply not adequate. Litigation has to prioritize overburdened communities in Washington and the communities that will feel the negative impacts of a project. Second, mitigation has to incorporate the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that we know we need [inaudible]. Mitigating to zero emissions, that sets up for a business as usual scenario and that leads us to catastrophic levels of climate change. We need to mitigate to the point that we are achieving reductions that we are getting on the glide path to the reductions, that Washington law, and the best available science tell us that we need. Each project needs to do its fair share to get us to these reductions by incorporating them into their mitigation requirements. Third, mitigation has to be based on a project's actual emissions, which Ecology is referring to gross emissions. Gross emissions represent the emissions increases that we know a project will cause and these are the emissions that we have to make sure we offset and then some to keep us, to ensure the climate future that we need. Net emission theories should not play any role in the rule and they certainly should not form the basis for the mitigation requirement. Or if it's important, not to conflate mitigation with the alternatives analysis. Under SEPA projects look at different and alternatives, alternative configurations for a given project. And project should pick the least environmentally harmful alternatives. This is where it's appropriate to consider, for example, alternative configurations, alternative technologies, other ways that a product can reduce, or a project can reduce its emissions. Only after an alternative is selected, least environmentally harmful alternative, then mitigation must be calculated based on that project configuration. Selecting the least environmentally harmful alternative is not its self, mitigation. Finally, we agree with Ecology that mitigation must be real, permanent, quantifiable, verifiable, enforceable, and additional. These standards must be as robust as possible to ensure that the mitigation actually gives us the reductions that we credit it with. Thank you for your time today.