Dennis McLerran

The number one action Washington should take is to continue incentives for vehicle purchases and EV charging infrastructure under the WAZIP, Clean Fuel Standard and VW diesel settlement funding. Continued appropriations from the Climate Commitment Act for incentive programs will provide the greatest potential for both greenhouse gas reductions and conventional air pollutant reductions, especially in disproportionately impacted communities. For medium and heavy-duty vehicles, because of the cost differential over diesel trucks and because of the up-front cost of megawatt level charging infrastructure, these incentive programs are crucial for meeting state transportation targets.

These programs should continue to contain plus-ups for drayage and secondary market purchases as the drayage sector is the hardest to reach due to the business models in place there and because of the needs of small businesses that are large participants in that sector. The Roadmap for Zero Emission Drayage developed under the sponsorship of the Northwest Seaport Alliance contains much more on how this sector can be successfully addressed.

Ecology should continue to work with key partners and stakeholders to identify both needs and opportunities for successful deployment of Zero Emission trucks and necessary supporting infrastructure and the ZEVergreen dialogue sessions are a good start on that. However, it needs to continue into the future. In addition, promising new business models like trucking as a service should have early access to funding programs as they are a promising opportunity for early adoption of ZEV technology. Grants and incentives should be developed to favor funding applications from projects that have the most potential air quality and climate change benefits to disproportionately impacted communities. Project evaluation criteria should include requirements that favor a focus on equity and community benefit as well as emissions reductions.

Given current regulatory uncertainty the state should attempt to backfill some of the prior light duty vehicle incentives that were available at the federal level. This could include on the hood incentives available at the time of purchase but perhaps at lower levels than past programs as cost differentials between light duty EVs and combustion alternatives are narrowing from manufacturers. Also, grant programs for charging infrastructure must address maintenance and uptime for publicly incentivized charging infrastructure as many sites currently are not well maintained. In addition, the high cost of publicly available fast charging at many sites exceeds the cost of current gasoline. While this may be difficult to structure, there should be consideration of cost caps on publicly incentivized charging infrastructure.

Coordination with utilities and the UTC to ensure that there are policies in place that allow more rapid deployment of infrastructure and cost recovery should be part of a successful program going forward. And, finally, access to charging for people that live in apartments needs to be better addressed, both in existing development and new construction. Building and construction codes as well as incentive programs should be developed that address this need. And, incentives for individuals to install charging infrastructure in homes should also be considered. Some manufacturers have developed their own incentive programs around this such as Ford, but the cost of home charging infrastructure can be a barrier to wider EV adoption.

In addition, a careful review of current legislative fees and incentives is merited. Licensing fee penalties for EVs are currently a disincentive for purchasers and a road use or mileage fee across all vehicle types could be more equitable and reduce EV disincentives.