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Editorial

Gregoire's green road map

Gov. Christine Gregoire's declarations about Washington's climate-change challenge were the most insightful when she committed to implement actions already under way and study new options for at least a year.

Gregoire's pronouncements were spurred by an international scientific consensus on the existence of global warming and the link to human causes. The governor and other leaders are clearly ready to explore remedies, but they need the road map she proposes. Good ideas abound. King County Executive Ron Sims produced a 176-page report that broadly and creatively explores the county's role in reducing global warming. For two years, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels has been a national leader rallying cities to think and act on climate change.

Gregoire is hardly breaking new ground here. Former Gov. Gary Locke teamed with his counterparts in Oregon and California to seek regional reductions in climate pollution. Multistate compacts dot the landscape, from the Northeast and the Plains to the Southwest Climate Change Initiative.

Our Legislature, and the environmental community that prodded it along, can take pride in green building regulations, tougher emissions standards for 2009 cars, retrofitting school buses and government vehicles to reduce diesel emissions, and easier recycling of TVs and computers.

Hubris is the enemy, such as talk of forbidding any new coal-fired plants in the state and drafting rules to penalize utilities for buying dirty power. Clearly, the language aims at a proposed \$1 billion, 600-megawatt coal-gasification plant at Kalama in Cowlitz County.

Legislation and public policy have to mature along with climate science and our understanding of the threat. Instead of arbitrary prohibitions, the future will be about setting emission standards and expectations for meeting them.

Effective legislative responses will look for ways to mitigate problems and provide relief, the essence of cap-and-trade pollution-reduction strategies.

The key is having standards the state wants to meet, and matching goals and plans to fit them. That is the wisdom behind the governor's call for a year-long review of what comes next.