

From: [Oliver Orjiako](#)
To: [Jeffrey Delapena](#)
Subject: FW: Community-based organizations sign on letter to Clark County regarding Equity and Accountability
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 10:24:44 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[CBO Sign On Ltr Equity, Climate & Accountability.pdf](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

FYI, for the comp plan index. Thank you.



OLIVER ORJIAKO
Director
COMMUNITY PLANNING

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From: Heidi Cody <heidi@waconservationaction.org>
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2025 6:19 PM
To: Cnty 2025 Comp Plan <comp.plan@clark.wa.gov>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Wil Fuentes <Wil.Fuentes@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Matt Little <mattlittle4clarkcounty@gmail.com>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Jenna Kay <Jenna.Kay@clark.wa.gov>; Jose Alvarez <Jose.Alvarez@clark.wa.gov>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Rebecca Messinger <Rebecca.Messinger@clark.wa.gov>
Cc: Siobhana McEwen <smcewen@swecwa.org>; Alondra Abrego-Viveros <aabregoviveros@swecwa.org>; Almendra Velazquez - Perez <almendra.v@fourthplainforward.org>
Subject: Community-based organizations sign on letter to Clark County regarding Equity and Accountability

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Hello Clark County Council and Staff,

I am pleased to share a coalition effort with you: a sign-on letter endorsed by thirteen mostly BIPOC led community-based organizations advancing equity and uplifting the voices of historically and systemically underserved communities in the public process for the Clark County Comprehensive Plan. We are deeply concerned and disappointed in

Councilmembers Belkote, Little and Yung for voting to complete a rushed agricultural land study. We urge Council to prioritize the housing equity and climate requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in the Comprehensive Plan, for the future of all County residents.

Please confirm receipt of this letter. We look forward to discussing this letter and our concerns and demands with you. Thank you for your ongoing work on Comprehensive Planning.

Sincerely,

Heidi Cody, on behalf of:

Southwest Washington Equity Coalition (SWEC)
Fourth Plain Forward
Vancouver Metro LULAC 47026 (also participated in CAG & EJC)
Alliance for Community Engagement (ACE) SW WA
Odyssey World International Educational Services
NAYA Family Center / NAYA Action Fund
Latino Leadership Northwest
Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington
Vietnamese Community of Clark County
Washington Conservation Action
Hispanic Disability Support SW WA / Pasitos Gigantes (also participated in CAG & EJC)
Vancouver for Peace
Community Roots Collaborative



Heidi Cody (she/her)

SW WA Field Manager

Washington Conservation Action

ACE Coalition Manager

Evergreen Workers Union: Member of
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1417 Fourth Ave, Ste 800, Seattle, WA 98101

June 17, 2025

Dear Clark County Council,

We are a coalition of community-based organizations advancing equity and uplifting the voices of historically and systemically underserved communities in the public process for the Clark County Comprehensive Plan. We are deeply concerned and disappointed in Councilmembers Belkoti, Little and Yung for voting to complete a rushed agricultural land study. **We urge Council to prioritize the housing equity and climate requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in the Comprehensive Plan, for the future of all County residents.**

Equity and Climate Resilience are At Stake

Delaying the Comprehensive Plan means the County Council will likely be out of compliance with the Department of Commerce. This will have damaging financial consequences and jeopardize funding needed for essential housing and environmental justice policies to protect community health, safety, equity, and climate resilience.

Relevant policy suggestions were developed with local community members. Abby Hollopeter of Odyssey World International Educational Services, Monica Zazueta Tabor of Vancouver Metro LULAC Council, Gabriela Ewing of Pasitos Gigantes and Minh Pham of Vietnamese Community of Clark County served on the County's Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC), a body formed to ensure inclusive engagement and integrate marginalized voices into developing climate policies mandated by the GMA.

Equity is deeply embedded in the state-mandated [Climate Element](#) in the GMA. The County's decision to spend \$300,000 of taxpayer money on a study County staff advised against due to its rushed timeline –and that the majority of public testimony opposed– is both fiscally irresponsible and fundamentally inequitable. A rushed land study is unlikely to be sufficient, which will leave the County vulnerable to legal challenges.

Follow the Law Regarding Mandatory Elements of Comprehensive Plans

Policies that protect housing stability and environmental justice are not optional—they are required. [RCW 36.70A.070](#) mandates that Comprehensive Plans “identify, protect, and enhance community resilience to climate change impacts, including social, economic, and built

environment factors, that support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice.”

What We Need in an Agricultural Land Study

Currently, the Comprehensive Plan does not require consideration of food security. However, Land Studies “may consider food security issues.”¹ We urge the County Council to require that food security be prioritized in its Ag Land Study.

What We Need in a Preferred Land Use Alternative

We urgently request the County adopt a Land Use Alternative which prioritizes climate, equity and resilience, which our communities know are necessary components of the Comprehensive Plan. We urge you to consider our demands related to climate resilience and equity:

- **Preserve agricultural land and all usable farmland for our food security**
 - Preserving agricultural land will enable people in Clark County to grow their own food and will support local farms. This will improve Clark County’s [climate resilience, which is required by the Climate Element](#).
 - Preserving ag land will reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), 67% of which are currently imported in Clark County (28% of these emissions are from imported food)². [Lowering GHGs is required by the Climate Element](#).
- **Reduce sprawl**
 - Ensure that any land added to the new urban growth boundary is designated for diverse housing types, including duplexes, fourplexes, and multifamily developments *and hold all cities within Clark County accountable to actually build diverse housing types and affordable housing*. Missing our GMA deadline is egregious because the cities of La Center and Ridgefield, who are pushing for this land study, have historically ignored and continue to ignore the need for equitable, affordable housing within their boundaries. Since 2023, the City of [La Center has not issued any permits for multifamily housing construction](#).

¹ [WAC 365-190-050](#), Agricultural Resource Lands

² 2024 Clark County Community Greenhouse Gas Report
chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/2024-07/clarkco-ghg-report_final_0.pdf

- Reducing sprawl will [reduce vehicle miles traveled \(VMTs\), which is a required part of Comprehensive Plans](#).
- Lowering VMTs will improve air quality and community health outcomes throughout the county, particularly for BIPOC and lower-income communities that live by major roadways.
- **Prioritize actual affordable housing and infill development** over Urban Growth Boundary expansions.
 - [Affordable housing is required by the GMA](#).
- **No Urban Growth Boundary expansions for Ridgefield and LaCenter.** Clark County Council voted to approve population projections provided by the Dept. of Commerce in 2023. State-provided data demonstrate that all cities within Clark County have enough land to accommodate the projected growth estimates that Council adopted.
- **Adopt parking reform based on [SB 5184](#), also known as the [Parking Reform and Modernization Act](#).** Doing so would allow for many more affordable housing units, more child care centers, and more small businesses.
- **Expand tree canopy** in unincorporated Clark County to mitigate urban heat island effects.
- **Increase parks** to address the County's parks level of service deficit to provide for the well-being of residents. This includes ensuring Clark County is in compliance with the state. The County's own Ross Hoover stated that state funding sources should be part of the parks funding plan.

Let It Be Noted: We Do Not Represent "Special Interests"

In 2024, the Washington Legislature prioritized the participation of historically excluded populations by funding us to engage our communities in Comprehensive Planning. This is why our coalition exists, and why we conducted extensive outreach to ensure their voices were heard. The only special interest our coalition represents is a significant portion of us who have been excluded from participating in governance, who lack the resources for lobbying, and who deserve to be able to call Clark County home for as long as we may choose.

This plan must intentionally support those who have historically, and continue to be, impacted by systemic racism, discrimination, poverty and environmental injustice. Through our

community engagement, it is clear that timely action on affordable housing, climate justice and food security policies is critical. Community members shared with us their increasing fears of displacement and the threat of homelessness due to the increasing deficit of affordable housing. During EJC engagement, we learned that environmental injustices are directly harming the health of many already disadvantaged residents.

For all our communities in Clark County to thrive we need to build a solid foundation with this Comprehensive Plan. Continued delay in meeting the deadline will only prolong and deepen the disproportionate burdens faced by vulnerable members of our communities. Councilmembers, it's important to consider how the BIPOC community feels unheard in decisions like the agricultural land study. We hope you can see this from our perspective and incorporate our needs into your decision-making.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Southwest Washington Equity Coalition (SWEC)
Fourth Plain Forward
Vancouver Metro LULAC 47026 (also participated in CAG & EJC)
Alliance for Community Engagement (ACE) SW WA
Odyssey World International Educational Services
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