

**From:** [Jeffrey Delapena](#)  
**To:** [Paul Burgess](#)  
**Cc:** [Cnty 2025 Comp Plan](#); [Oliver Orjiako](#); [Jenna Kay](#); [Jose Alvarez](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Comment from Fourth Plain Forward – Comprehensive Plan Climate Element  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 3, 2025 7:50:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Good day, Paul,

Thank you very much for providing this letter and Fourth Plain Forward's feedback related to the Climate Element of Clark County's Comprehensive Plan update.

This will be brought to the attention of the Planning Commission and added to the Public Record.

Best regards,



**Jeff Delapena**  
Program Assistant  
COMMUNITY PLANNING

564.397.4558



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**From:** Paul Burgess <paul.burgess@fourthplainforward.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 2, 2025 10:01 PM  
**To:** Jeffrey Delapena <Jeffrey.Delapena@clark.wa.gov>  
**Cc:** 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 <Matt.Little@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>; Jenna Kay <Jenna.Kay@clark.wa.gov>; Jose Alvarez <Jose.Alvarez@clark.wa.gov>  
**Subject:** Comment from Fourth Plain Forward – Comprehensive Plan Climate Element

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Dear Jeffrey,

On behalf of Fourth Plain Forward, please find attached our comment regarding the Comprehensive Plan climate element and the importance of explicitly including references to race.

We strongly support the coalition letter already submitted and wish to underscore how the lived experiences of the communities we serve, along with Washington State equity requirements, make it essential that race remain part of the plan. Our full comment is included below for your consideration and the public record.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your service on behalf of Clark County residents.

Respectfully,

Paul Burgess

**Paul Burgess**  
Executive Director

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*(He, him)*

**[Book a meeting with me](#)**

[paul.burgess@fourthplainforward.org](mailto:paul.burgess@fourthplainforward.org) | Cell 360-450-9974

[Fourth Plain Forward | Vancouver, WA](#)

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## Comment from Fourth Plain Forward

Clark County Planning Commission  
cc: Clark County Council and staff



Dear Commissioners,

Fourth Plain Forward strongly supports the coalition letter and the inclusion of explicit references to race in the climate element of the Comprehensive Plan.

As an organization rooted in the Fourth Plain Corridor, the most systemically disadvantaged area of Clark County, we witness daily how historic redlining, racial covenants, and siting decisions continue to shape unequal health outcomes, housing access, and exposure to environmental harm. Excluding race from the Comprehensive Plan would erase these realities and weaken the County's ability to craft targeted, effective policy. Equity requires precision, and precision requires naming race.

Clark County has already invested in an inclusive process by convening the Climate Advisory Group and Environmental Justice Council. To strip race from their recommendations now would undermine the credibility of that process and signal to communities of color that their lived experiences are still not being heard.

It is also important to recognize the policy and funding context in Washington State. The Climate Commitment Act and the HEAL Act require agencies and local governments to identify and prioritize disproportionately impacted populations, which includes race and ethnicity. The Covenant Homeownership Act likewise codifies the impacts of historic racial discrimination into state law. If Clark County's Comprehensive Plan removes race, it risks falling out of alignment with these requirements. That misalignment could not only reduce trust locally but also jeopardize the County's eligibility for state-directed climate and housing funds.

This is a moment for leadership. Including race in the Comprehensive Plan demonstrates honesty about history, accountability to current disparities, and readiness to build a healthier, more resilient future for all residents. It also ensures Clark County remains aligned with Washington's equity standards, positioning the County for the resources needed to implement its climate goals.

We urge you to adopt the climate element with race explicitly acknowledged. Doing so honors the work of the CAG and EJC, respects state law, and upholds the County's responsibility to the communities most affected by climate change and environmental injustice.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Burgess", is positioned above the printed name.

Paul Burgess, Executive Director

Fourth Plain Forward