

Messaging Guide - Attending a Virtual Public Hearing for the Task Force on Climate Change

Tips for sharing testimony at a public hearing:

1. Prepare: Take a moment to think through and write out your talking points.
2. Personalize: Be sure to include your personal story AND a possible solution to the problem.
3. Practice: Tell a family member, coworker or friend what you plan to share.
4. Present: Be calm, respectful and concise in your testimony, you'll only have a few minutes to make an impression.

Note: If you are asked a question you don't know the answer to, it's ok to say, "I will look into that and follow up with more information."

Additional tip: Set a tone of appreciation. Thank Lieutenant Governor Barnes and the Task Force members. It's important that we share that we appreciate that they are putting time and resources into coming up with a comprehensive climate action plan for Wisconsin.

General messages:

- Wisconsin must quickly and equitably reduce our carbon emissions in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.
- Wisconsinites are experiencing more flooding, extreme weather events, and bad air days as a result of climate change.
- 2019 was the second hottest year on record globally, and the past decade was the hottest decade ever recorded.
- We know that most of the carbon pollution in Wisconsin is coming from power plants and transportation.
- Right now the best way to get this problem under control is to make sure that Wisconsin does everything we can to reduce our carbon emissions.

Themes on climate solutions:

Public Health:

- Rising temperatures lead to more extreme heat, causing heat-related illness and death and contributing to cardiovascular disease.
- Severe weather like flooding can cause injuries, fatalities and mental health impacts.
- Air pollution contributes to increased cases of asthma and cardiovascular disease
- Climate change is also contributing to a changing vector ecology, leading to the spread of diseases like Lyme disease, malaria, encephalitis, and West Nile virus
- Climate change is impacting water quality, leading to increased outbreaks of harmful algae blooms, as well as more cases of cryptosporidiosis, campylobacter, and cholera

Equity:

- We know that those most directly impacted by the worst effects of our warming climate will be communities of color, economically disadvantaged communities and communities that are already experiencing other structural injustices.
- Policies intended to mitigate climate change need to take into account unintended impacts and environmental justice issues as we move the state toward being carbon neutral by 2050.

Renewable energy:

- To make sure Wisconsin achieves its carbon-free electricity by 2050 goal, we need to transition our electricity generation away from fossil fuels and towards solar, wind and energy efficiency.
- Electricity produced by renewable sources is increasingly cheaper than from coal and gas.
- Some utilities, including Xcel Energy, are committing to be net zero by 2050, but all utilities in Wisconsin need to make bigger commitments to shift more quickly to renewable electricity generation.

Energy Efficiency:

- Energy efficiency is a critical strategy for mitigating climate change, and recent estimates suggest ambitious, cost-effective, and technically possible, energy efficiency can reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2050 and get us closer to US climate goals (ACEEE, Halfway There: Energy Efficiency Can cut Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Half by 2050).
- Scaling up energy efficiency is possible immediately with public and private investment in energy efficiency for appliances, buildings, vehicles, and industry, all while saving consumers money, creating jobs, and cleaning the air.

Transportation:

- Transportation emissions are the largest category of greenhouse gas emissions in America, and the second largest in Wisconsin after coal.
- Personal vehicles are the greatest source of greenhouse gas pollution within the transportation sector. Wisconsin can help accelerate electric vehicle (EV) adoption through policies that boost market demand and facilitate EV charging.
- Investing in public transportation will reduce road congestion, slash transportation emissions, and benefit our communities in many other ways -- from cleaner air to improved public health and better access to work, school and leisure opportunities. Additionally, transitioning Wisconsin's diesel- and gas-powered transit and school bus fleets to all-electric buses will help protect public health.
- One of the best ways to incentivize active, zero carbon transportation is to provide extensive, safe, and reliable walking and biking infrastructure throughout the state.