

# SMART CLIMATE INVESTMENTS FOR A CLEAN ECONOMY

The Climate Commitment Act (CCA) generates funding to invest in carbon reduction solutions while capping total carbon pollution in the state. Washington is a top-ranked state for Best Economy, Best States to Live In, and Top States for Business. With smart public policies and investments, our state can continue to lead the way in building a clean economy that outpaces other states. This **Smart Climate Investments for a Clean Economy** series highlights projects that achieve cost-effective benefits for Washington communities, including those most economically-stressed, pollution-impacted, and under-served.



## METHANE REDUCTION THROUGH DAIRY DIGESTERS

### WHAT

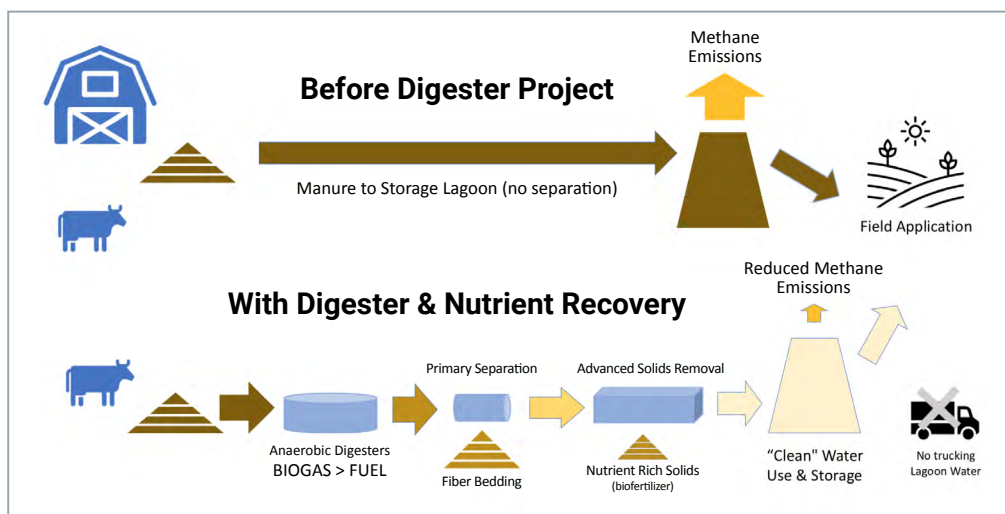
Senate Bill [SB 5551](#) sponsored by Senator Shewmake and [HB 1574](#) sponsored by Representative Rule leverage the existing Sustainable Farms and Fields Program to support dairy digester development and expand support for biochar and other agricultural sequestration projects.

Washington needs to generate 6.1 million tons of additional carbon emission reductions to reach its by 2030 goal.<sup>1</sup> The Climate Commitment Act (CCA) generates new resources for strategic investments in carbon reduction solutions. Clean & Prosperous Washington is partnering with the Washington State Dairy Federation in support of [SB 5551](#) / [HB 1574](#) and asking the legislature to make an investment of \$40 million<sup>2</sup> in CCA expenditures to this program.

### WHY

Clean & Prosperous Institute led a [2022 study mission](#) to California where our delegation learned about the California Climate Investment-funded Dairy Digester Research and Development Program ([DDRDP](#)).

### How Do Dairy Digesters Reduce GHG Emissions?




**COST**

**\$10**

per metric ton\*

\*California Climate Investments 2022 Mid-Year Data Update, page 4

<sup>1</sup> Washington State Department of Ecology, December 2021

<sup>2</sup> California has allocated \$289 million to its Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP)

## WE LEARNED FROM CALIFORNIA'S REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE WITH THE DDRDP THAT:

- Grants for digesters to capture existing methane pollution from manure and convert it into a useful energy product (electricity or renewable natural gas) is one of the **most cost-effective ways to eliminate greenhouse gases**.
- The DDRDP alone is projected to **achieve more avoided greenhouse gases** (GHG) than any other program in California—29% of total GHG reductions while being allocated just 2.1% of the funds implemented to date.<sup>3</sup>
- California's DDRDP program has provided funding for projects serving 177 dairies which are projected to reduce over 21 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e over 10 years. It is **reducing carbon emissions at less than \$10 per metric ton**.



Clean & Prosperous Washington recommends that our state establish a grant program to support our state's dairies and create low-carbon energy and fuels. There are approximately 270,000 dairy cows in Washington state and just a small number of dairies are currently using digesters. Additionally, the program can incentivize more efficient and effective recovery of methane for energy from other sources of organic waste streams like food processing waste.

Avoiding or lowering methane emissions will help Washington state cost-effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions, aiding efforts to reach net zero by 2050. Statewide, the agricultural sector is responsible for 6.2% of climate pollution, which includes 1.5% of the state's climate emissions from manure management.<sup>4</sup> The aim of a Dairy Digester grant program is to cost-share with farmers, enabling existing resources to be used in a manner that delivers climate pollutant reduction and improved economic, environmental, and community health. The methane captured by dairies can be used to help entities meet their Clean Energy Transformation Act goals and compliance obligations under the Cap & Invest program.

## HOW

Anaerobic digesters capture and convert methane from organic waste to useful energy. They also can produce biofertilizers that can replace fossil fuel-derived and imported fertilizers and biochar that provides soil and carbon sequestration benefits. Dairy Digesters are aligned with Ecology's *Use Food Well Washington Plan*, Commerce's *State Energy Strategy*, and the findings of Commerce's Rural Clean Energy advisory committee.<sup>5</sup> It is an important connection for the agricultural community to the goals of the Climate Commitment Act, Clean Fuels Program, and Organic Materials Management Act.

## CLEAN & PROSPEROUS WASHINGTON RECOMMENDS THAT GRANTS SHOULD FOCUS ON PROJECTS WITH ATTRIBUTES THAT INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Technically feasible GHG reductions that are measurable and demonstrable
- Increased rural and agricultural economic viability
- Offering new innovations in GHG reduction and capture
- Accelerating Washington state's clean fuels and net zero emissions future
- Improving air and water quality
- Replacing fossil fuel-based fertilizers
- Converting wastes and pollutants to value-added products

Funding should prioritize projects that achieve the greatest improvement per dollar invested, encourage broader adoption, leverage public and attract private funds, and benefit the community, including economically stressed, pollution-impacted, and under-served communities. Additional considerations and support for infrastructure development (transmission and distribution) and permit streamlining are likely to be necessary.

<sup>3</sup> Details on program allocations, avoided GHG emissions, and other metrics can be found in the bi-annual California Climate Investment Report: [www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/annual-report](http://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/annual-report)

<sup>4</sup> *Washington State Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory: 1990–2019*, page 21

<sup>5</sup> A legislative report can be downloaded from the Commerce Rural Clean Energy Innovation page at: [www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/clean-energy-fund/rural-clean-energy/](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/clean-energy-fund/rural-clean-energy/)