

**From:** [Hafkemeyer, Ami \(EFSEC\)](#)  
**To:** [EFSEC.m Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: WPC NEWS: High gas prices on the horizon, plus Sound Transit plans to spend \$235,000 per parking spot and more!  
**Date:** Sunday, June 18, 2023 4:54:53 PM

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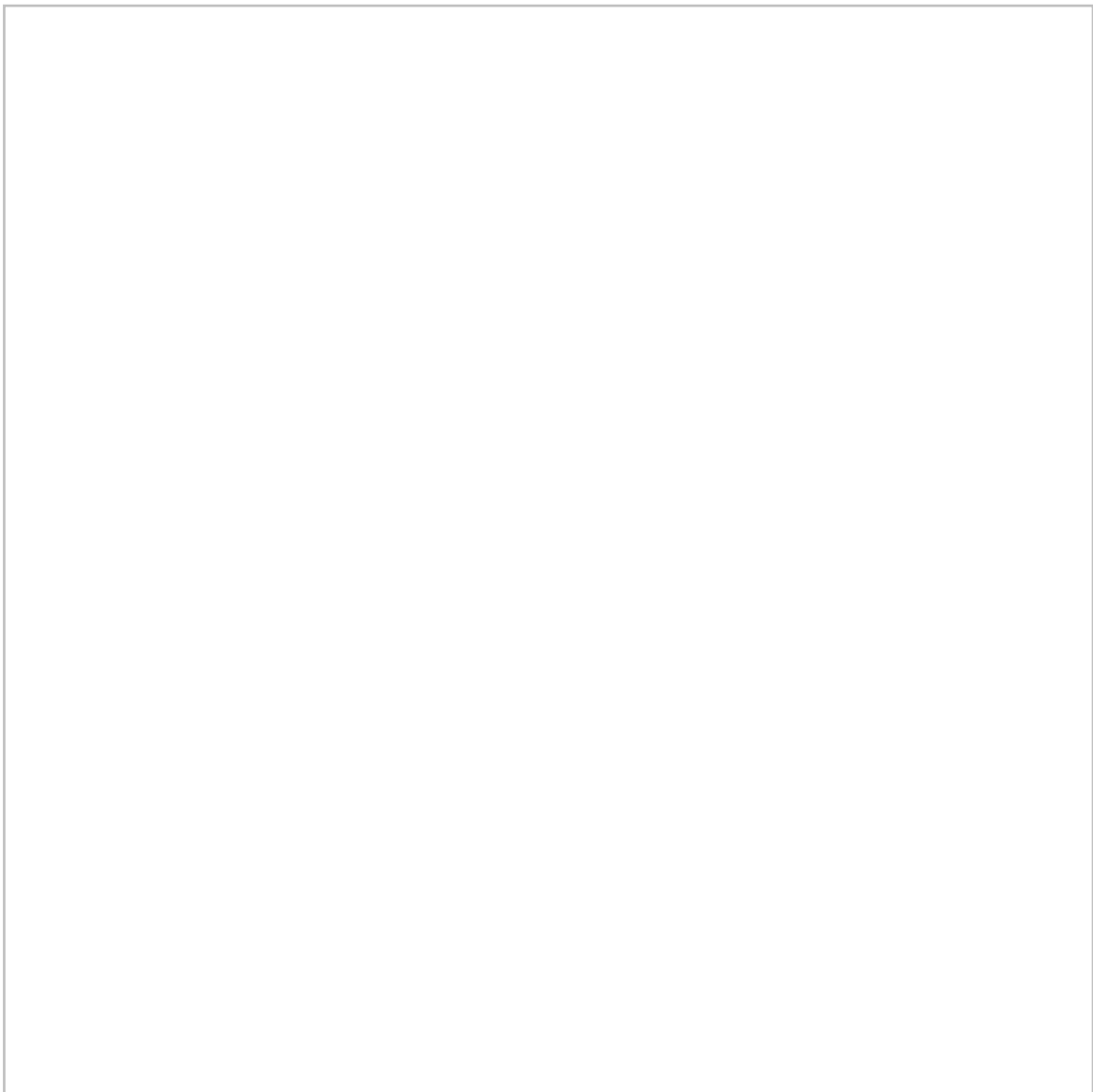
Best wishes,  
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**From:** CEASE2020 <[cease2020@aol.com](mailto:cease2020@aol.com)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 17, 2023 6:48 AM  
**To:** CEASE SMITH <[cease2020@aol.com](mailto:cease2020@aol.com)>  
**Subject:** WPC NEWS: High gas prices on the horizon, plus Sound Transit plans to spend \$235,000 per parking spot and more!

External Email

Hi, read the op-eds and learn more about the real negative impacts of renewables. Greg Wagner C.E.A.S.E. CITIZENS EDUCATED ABOUT SOLAR ENERGY [cease2020.org](http://cease2020.org)



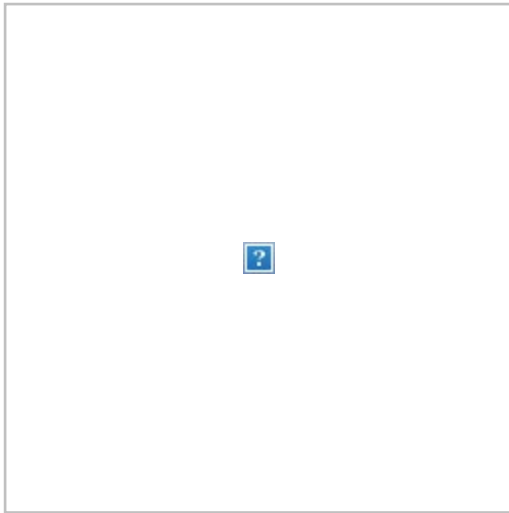
Friend, this is your weekly update with the key news and analysis concerning Washington state policy. Be sure to share it with friends!

## **AT A GLANCE!**

**For those too busy to click and read, here's a list of this week's MUST-KNOWS**  
More details are available in the blog links below.

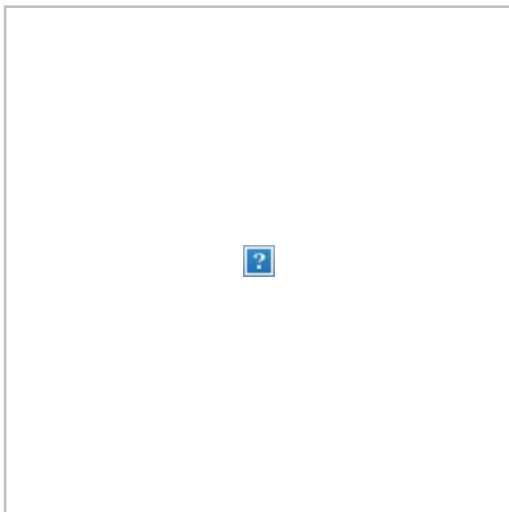
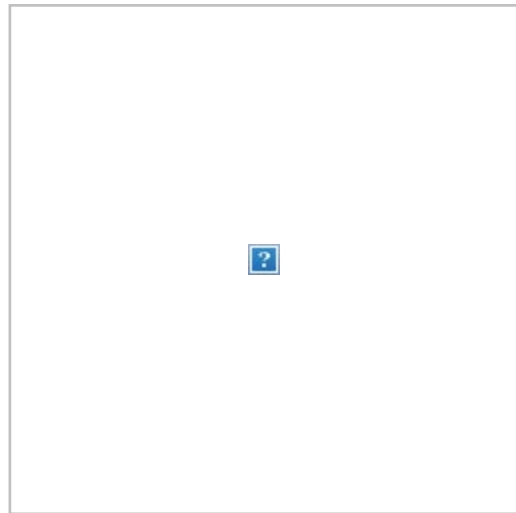
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The **Supreme Court** ruled that union  
**strikes that endanger company**  
**equipment are eligible to be served**



**lawsuits.** This protects consumers and businesses from damage and destructive behavior that can have long-term harmful effects.

Seattle City Councilmember Alex Pedersen has introduced a **2% capital gains income tax on city residents.** It would mirror the state imposed income tax on capital gains by collecting on gains over \$250,000 with a few exemptions.



**Sound Transit plans to spend \$350 million on parking structures** at three commuter rail stations in Auburn, Kent, and Sumner. The cost factors out to **\$235,000 per parking spot!**



## FEATURED LINKS

### FROM THE BLOG:

- [Where is the accountability for government “experts” who get it wrong?](#)
- [Supreme Court rules to protect private property from union violence](#)
- [Seattle City Councilmember Proposes Capital Gains Income Tax](#)
- [Sound Transit plans parking garages that will cost more than \\$235,000 per stall](#)
- [How to fix Washington’s anti-innovation rules on carbon-reducing projects](#)

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Regional Reception Series** - WPC is hosting receptions around the state where you can hear from our President & CEO as well as our researchers on the latest updates. Happening now and throughout the next few months, [check to see when we'll be hosting near you!](#)
- **WA Policy on the Go is now EVERY OTHER WEEK** so watch for the next event on [Tuesday, June 27](#).
- **YPs Seattle Happy Hour - June 21, 6:00PM** - Join the Young Professionals for a summer happy hour at Saltchuk Marine in Seattle! President & CEO of Saltchuk Marine Organization Jason Childs will be speaking as well as an update from WPC President & CEO Mike Gallagher. [Register here!](#)

### OP-EDS, PUBLICATIONS, & MEDIA:

- [Prepare for even higher gas prices this summer](#)
- [Washington State is First-in-the-nation for Getting it Wrong on Long-term care](#)
- [Todd Myers cited on \[un\]Divided with Brandi Kruse](#)
- [Washington cap-and-trade program now adds 45 cents per gallon](#)
- [Latest WA Carbon Auction Likely to Boost Gas Prices \\$.45 Cents](#)
- [WA’s second carbon auction nets \\$500M, gas prices could jump](#)
- [Washington Raises \\$480 Million in Latest Carbon Auction, Group Says it Will Raise Washington gas Prices Another 45 Cents](#)
- [Analysis: The Actual Levelized Cost Of Energy Suggests Green Energy Is Hiding Costs](#)
- [Tensions, gas prices rise as Washington state auctions carbon](#)
- [Additional costs of wind, solar power](#)
- [Supreme Court rules to protect private property from union violence](#)
- [Washington second to only California in fuel price](#)
- [What SHOULD Washington and Jay Inslee do to fix their carbon reduction projects?](#)

**For more Washington Policy Center in the news and WPC Op-Eds [click here](#).**

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## FEATURED EVENT



Join the Young Professionals for a summer happy hour at Saltchuk Marine in Seattle! We'll be joined by **Jason Childs** to discuss insights on the economy, the business environment in Washington State and finding opportunity in challenging markets along with WPC's President, **Mike Gallagher**.

Wine, beer, and appetizers will be served.

[Register here!](#)

## FEATURED OP-EDS

# Washington State is First-in-the-nation for Getting it Wrong on Long-term care *as appeared in RealClear Policy*

**By Elizabeth Hovde, Director**

Center for Worker Rights and Center for Healthcare



*“If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.”*

— Catherine Aird

Taxpayer-funded safety nets should be reserved for people in need, not widened for

people *not* in need. But Washington state lawmakers have decided otherwise when it comes to long-term care.

In a partisan move, the 2019 Washington state Legislature passed a [law](#) to start a new social program that is meant to be funded by a payroll tax of 58 cents on every \$100 a worker makes.

Starting July 1, a worker making \$50,000 a year will have \$290 extra dollars taken away each year, while a person making \$100,000 loses \$580 and so on, with no income cap. Someday, a person who is heavily invested in this program can apply for an inadequate lifetime benefit of \$36,500 to use for long-term-care services — *if* the worker actually needs long-term care, has paid in 10 or more years without a break of five or more years and has health needs that qualify them under the state's definition as a person needing assistance with daily-life activities. If you've paid into what's being called the [WA Cares Fund](#) your whole working life yet no longer live in Washington state when you need long-term care, you're out of luck. The benefit is not portable, no matter how much you've been required to contribute.

The plan is intended to save the state money on the long-term costs associated with its Medicaid program, and it places taxpayers on the hook for paying the wages of home caregivers. That includes family members.

[Service Employees International Union 775](#), a union representing long-term-care workers, [lobbied](#) heavily for the law, remains a primary supporter of it, and will be giving state-required training to new caregivers who hope to receive taxpayer money from the fund.

Taxpayers, seeing the burden, ulterior motives and unfairness of the law, have been asking the state to repeal it since its inception. First, they tried with an [advisory vote](#) that lawmakers could ignore (and did). Then, voters turned down a [funding measure](#) meant to help the plan along. Most recently, they urged [legislation](#) that had the support of many lawmakers but that was shut down by the state's majority party.

Our population is graying and growing. People are living longer. And more elderly people are using long-term-care services to help them with activities of daily life. Many are also relying on the government to provide their long-term-care needs, driving up state costs. It's no secret in Washington state that hiding one's assets is a part of some people's financial planning near the end of life, so they can qualify for Medicaid long-term-care help instead of paying their own way.

Instead of creating awareness about the issue, cutting taxes on insurance products, encouraging savings and discouraging reliance on Medicaid, which is meant for people in need, Washington state lawmakers chose to become the first state in the nation to create a long-term-care safety net for people in need and people not in need.

Now lawmakers in other states are watching to see how the Washington state test case goes. Some state legislative bodies, like [New York and Pennsylvania](#), have already seen proposed legislation similar to Washington's misguided House Bill 1087.

[Read the full op-ed here!](#)

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# Prepare for even higher gas prices this summer

*as appeared in The Spokesman Review*

**By Sean V. O'Brien**  
Eastern Washington Director



After our state's first carbon auction this past February, industries operating in our state paid a staggering \$300 million to the Washington Department of Ecology to put toward programs the state claims will reduce carbon emissions and fight climate change.



The Climate Commitment Act, signed into law by Gov. Inslee in 2021, created a cap-and-trade program in which the state caps how much carbon industries can emit. The program requires these industries to obtain “emissions allowances” equal to their greenhouse gas emissions. Similar to purchasing stocks and bonds, these allowances are obtained through auctions hosted by Ecology.

In the aftermath of the second auction held this year at the end of May, as much as \$557 million will be brought in – something Washington Policy Center analysis projects will result in a 45 cent per gallon gas price increase for Washingtonians.

The auction’s price of carbon was so high it triggered an extra auction of allowances that must now be held in August.

Since the start of 2023, my colleague Todd Myers, Washington Policy Center’s Environmental Director, has tracked gas prices here and in other states in the region to analyze the impacts of the CCA. No other state is seeing the rate of increases we have been facing since the program’s inception.

After the second auction, the carbon prices increased 15 percent to \$56.01 per metric ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, translating to about 45 cents per gallon of gasoline and 54 cents per gallon for diesel – meaning Washingtonians will pay about 84% more than California’s price on carbon.

As Myers states, “Although Washington is paying more for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than California, that additional cost doesn’t help the environment – it just harms our economy. As long as the governor and agency staff continue to deny that reality, Washington residents will pay a high price for energy, but won’t receive the environmental benefits they are paying for.”

The Spokesman-Review’s own reporting earlier this year highlighted the impact of increasing gas prices on local communities and the fact that residents are crossing the border into Idaho to avoid our high prices at the pump.

In response to questions posed to Gov. Inslee last year regarding the possibility of increased prices under the new law, he claimed, “This is going to have a minimal impact, if any. Pennies. We are talking about pennies.”

But in the aftermath of Myers’ tracking of the state’s statements surrounding the expected outcomes of the program, the Inslee administration quietly scrubbed its website to remove its original claims regarding the potential increases in prices. The Ecology website no longer includes its projections of an increase of “1% to 3% in 2023” gas prices. Instead, they now claim a 1 to 3% increase in the “overall economic impact.”

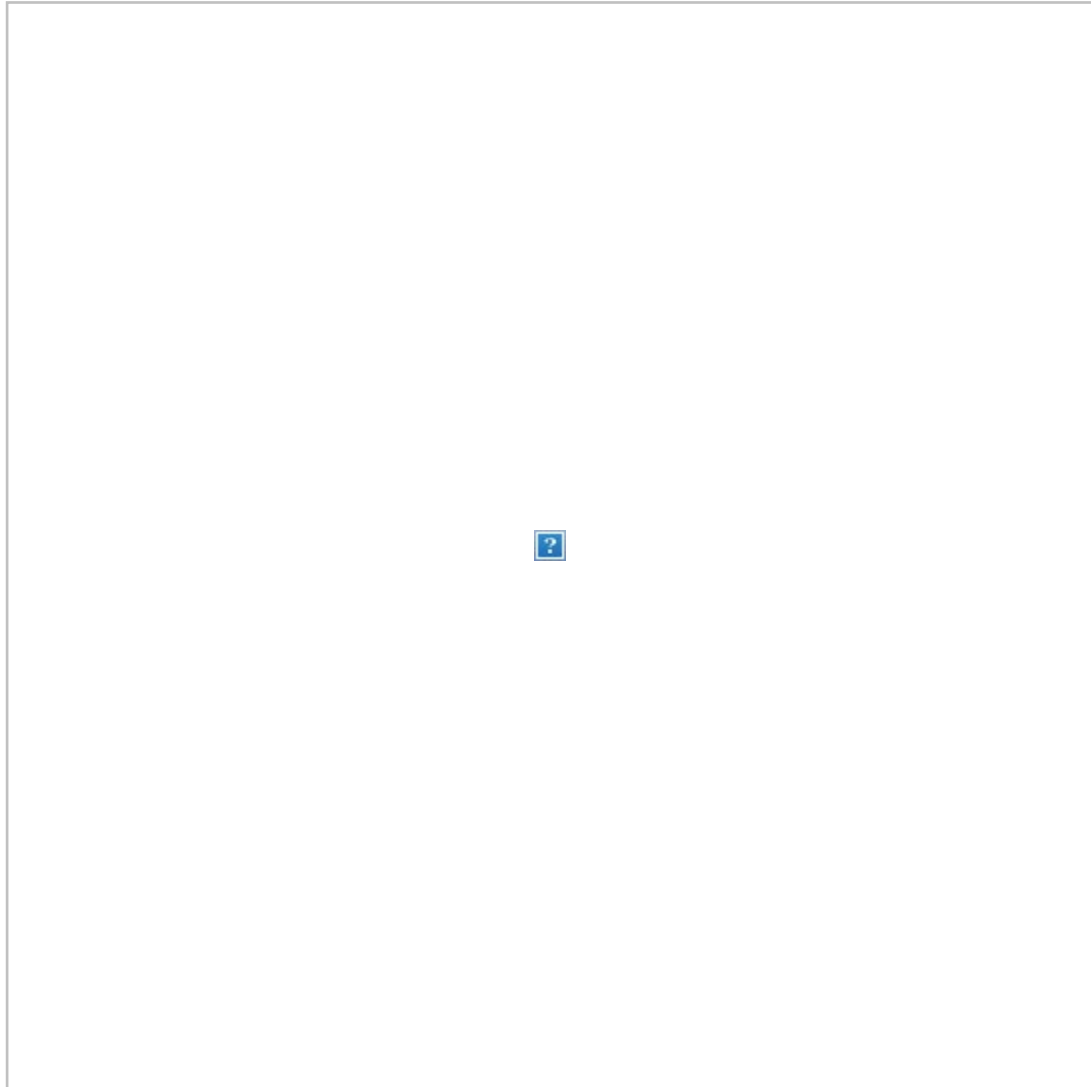
[Read the full op-ed here!](#)

## FEATURED BLOGS

# Sound Transit plans parking garages that will cost more than \$235,000 per stall

**Charles Prestrud, Director**

WPC Center for Transportation



The Seattle Times recently ran a story about Sound Transit's plans to spend \$350 million to build parking structures at three commuter rail stations (Auburn, Kent and Sumner). The math works out to about \$235,000 per stall. There was a time not that long ago when you could buy a house in South King County for that price, but now apparently it only buys one parking space.

Parking has always been a sticky issue for Sound Transit. On one hand, free parking at stations has been an effective way to increase access to their service. On the other hand, Sound Transit has tended to view cars as the enemy, and they have had board members who opposed providing parking at stations or anything else that might make it easier to

drive.

The planned parking structures may have seemed like a good idea in 2008 when they were added to the ST2 plan, but over the last fifteen years the price has more than doubled and much has changed. It's no longer obvious spending \$350 million for parking garages is a good investment.

One of the biggest changes has been the decline in transit ridership. It's no secret there was a steep drop-off in ridership during the COVID pandemic. In 2022 Sounder ridership was 70% below pre-COVID levels (see table below). To be fair, ridership has rebounded a bit from the COVID lows in 2021, but demand is still very weak. No doubt Sound Transit and the rail cheerleaders would prefer to extrapolate off a low baseline, but the data also shows that Sounder ridership peaked in 2018, more than a year before COVID hit, and productivity (riders per vehicle service hour) has been trending downward since 2016. The ridership trend raises the question of whether an additional 1,500 parking stalls will be needed in the foreseeable future.

[See the full blog here!](#)

## **KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD JOIN THE WPC TEAM?**

### **WPC Opportunities Available!**

*The Washington Policy Center is now accepting applications for the following positions:*

#### **WPC's Janet and Doug True Research Internship Program**

Washington Policy Center offers part-time internship positions geared toward undergraduate students and recent graduates for each academic quarter including summer. Interns work approximately 12 hours per week. WPC allows flexible hours to work around the intern's class schedule while attending nearby colleges and universities.

Through the Janet and Doug True Research Internship Program, WPC has had the privilege of excellent interns each quarter since 1999. Former WPC interns have gone on to work in Washington D.C., have run for office, have completed prestigious academic endeavors and have begun successful careers in the private sector. Many credit their interest in policy to their time as a WPC intern.

[Click here for more information.](#)

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