

Climate change task force calls for utilities to further reduce carbon emissions

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The final report of the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change is calling for a reduction of carbon emissions from utilities.

The report calls for a net reduction of at least 60 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and 100 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

According to the new report, the Public Service Commission projects state utilities are on pace to reduce their emissions to 44 percent below 2005 levels by 2026. The report says that doesn't include the expected reductions from a coal plant retirement announced in May.

In all, the report lists 46 top-tier recommendations from the task force.

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Others include the creation of an Office of Environmental Justice to design climate policies that reduce emissions and address impacts within communities of color and low-income areas.

It also calls for increasing investment in Focus on Energy. A similar proposal was included in the PSC's budget request. The program funds energy efficiency and renewable energy projects through a requirement that investor-owned utilities put 1.2 percent of operating revenues toward the effort. The proposal would double that to 2.4 percent of operating revenues, an addition of \$100 million.

Other proposals include supporting the low-cost debt refinancing of clean energy projects and the state leading by example through reducing its own emissions.

Another provision calls for anti-racism training for legislators and staff to “address the systemic bias and racism that exists in government.”

The report argues, “Environmental racism and climate change are inextricably linked because the embedded racism and bias that exist within social, government, corporate, and financial systems deem who benefits from activities that produce harmful emissions and who suffers most from the consequences.”

The report also includes what it calls “tier 2” policy options that were discussed during the process, but drew concern from some task force members.

Those items included avoiding new fossil fuel infrastructure in the state and divesting the state from fossil fuel stocks and other interests. The latter proposal would apply to both the State of Wisconsin Investment Board and the UW System Foundation.

See the release [here](#).