

The banner features a dark blue background with a light blue geometric pattern of overlapping shapes. The text is centered and reads "Clean Fuel Forum:" in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, with "2021 Industry and Policy Forecast" in a smaller, light blue sans-serif font below it. A thin green horizontal line is at the bottom of the banner.

Clean Fuel Forum:

2021 Industry and Policy Forecast

October 22, 2020

Commissioner Ryan Calkins Remarks

Good morning and welcome to the Port of Seattle's Clean Fuels Forum. We take great pride in being in the vanguard of sustainability for ports in the country and around the world, and today we are tackling one of the biggest challenges: the transition away from fossil fuels in heavy transportation.

I also want to thank all of today's speakers for their leadership and expertise on this issue.

We are privileged today to hear from policy leaders who will be instrumental in the upcoming legislative session...State Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz, State Senator Rebecca Saldaña, State Senator Liz Lovelett, and State Representative Joe Fitzgibbon.

We'll also hear from industry leaders who are already engaged in low-carbon fuel production, just not here in Washington state...

And that's what brings us here together this morning.

Three years ago the Port of Seattle made the passage of a low-carbon fuel standard our top legislative priority. We had come to understand, based on similar legislation up and down the west coast, that a clean fuel standard was a key tool for reducing both climate changing green house gas emissions as well as local air pollution.

We had come to understand that we could not be leaders in the environmental movement, if we weren't also leaders in environmental justice.

And nowhere is the lack of environmental justice clearer than in health disparities. The impacts of fossil fuels are felt most acutely in low income areas and communities of color.

As we began to see opportunity for redress, the world was shaken by the pandemic. For the Port, first and foremost an economic development organization, our priority is to safely spur a return to economic vitality.

Today we can see the first glimmers of light at the end of the tunnel—promising vaccines and treatments, a greater understanding of how to prevent and end the spread of COVID-19. But we also recognize that the economic damage already done requires a thoughtful and dedicated effort.

If there is a silver lining to the pandemic, it's the opportunity to address the existing inequities as a part of our recovery plan.

Today we are here to discuss a plan that remedies those longstanding environmental injustices and generates new economic opportunity.

Step 1 is a public policy mechanism: a Clean Fuel Standard. As it stands, Washingtonians have to pay more for renewable fuels, compared to markets like California and Oregon that have enacted a standard.

In the case of Sustainable Aviation Fuel, which is of great interest to us at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, we could reduce 50-80 percent of our carbon emissions, and reduce sulfur emissions, soot, and ultra-fine particulates.

These are not abstract, “wouldn't it be nice” kind of ideas. In our minds at the Port of Seattle, these are urgent public policy imperatives.

The reason we invited industry leaders here today is because low-carbon fuel markets are not an abstract idea. They are happening. Consumers are buying, industry is investing, and business is booming.

And the time is now, at this inflection point in our global economy created by the pandemic.

But we are not alone in this mission. We have an amazing set of allies fighting for change.

Including one special guest who it is my honor to welcome.

Today I get to introduce a friend of nearly two decades, who I have seen tackle the big problems throughout his career.

Ramón Cruz has over 20 years of experience in advocacy at the intersection of sustainability, environmental and energy policy, urban planning, and climate change. He has worked as deputy director of the state environmental regulatory agency in Puerto Rico, and held senior positions at the Environmental Defense Fund, the Partnership for New York City, and the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy. And five months ago, he became the President of the Sierra Club, one of our nation's leading environmental organizations.

Ramón is here to share his personal perspective on the fight for climate justice. Ramon, thank you so much for joining us today!