

SPOKANE'S WASTE-TO-ENERGY (WTE) FACILITY



Seeking an equitable compliance pathway under Washington's Climate Commitment Act (CCA)

City of Spokane - March 2026



A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT



The State of Washington was a partner in the facility



Beginning operations in 1991, **Spokane's WTE facility is a critical component** of a comprehensive regional solid waste management system.

The **State of Washington provided \$60 million** grant from the sale of \$450 million in bonds to support construction of the facility as part of **voter-approved State Referendum 39 in 1980**.

WTE protects Spokane's sole-source drinking source, the Spokane Valley – Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer.

CAPACITY

Processes ~ 250,000 tons of municipal solid waste annually from the Spokane region.

ENERGY GENERATION

Generates ~ 150 gigawatt hours of electricity per year, enough to power 13,000 homes.

REGIONAL SERVICE

Serves the City of Spokane, Spokane County, and several smaller municipalities. The WTE also **provides needed special services beyond the region** including:

- **Law Enforcement** - narcotics, evidence, weapons
- **Federal or International Regulated Waste** – airlines, cargo and cruise ships, Antarctica research stations, and pharmaceutical takebacks.

LIFECYCLE ASSESSMENT (LCA) STUDY

A **2024 Department of Ecology study** conducted by CDM Smith compared Spokane's **WTE facility to three regional landfills**. Using a 20-year Global Warming Potential (GWP), the **WTE provides the greatest net reduction in GHG emissions compared to landfills**.



A PATH TO AN EQUITABLE LEGISLATIVE SOLUTION

Despite its environmental benefits, Spokane's WTE facility is the only municipal solid waste system in Washington currently subject to the CCA's "Cap and Invest" costs.

- **EXEMPTION GAP**
CCA provides exemptions for landfills and alternative compliance pathways for electric utilities, from which the **WTE facility was excluded**.
- **FINANCIAL BURDEN**
Spokane-area residents **face an estimated \$4 million to \$8 million increase in annual compliance costs** that no other Washington residents pay.
- **ECONOMIC JUSTICE**
The **potential 20% increase** in utility bills **disproportionately affects Spokane**, where the **Median Household Income (MHI) is 24% lower than the state average**.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**
Trucking waste to another jurisdiction will increase emissions and shift the burden of disposal to a **community, with even lower income** than Spokane.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE

The City of Spokane has been working with state legislators, environmental advocates, and the Department of Ecology to allow for a more equitable approach to solid waste management that would ultimately lead to carbon emissions reductions under the Climate Commitment Act.

A bill was passed in the House in February, and a modified version was then passed in the Senate on March 4th. It will now go back to the House for concurrence before the legislative session ends on March 12th.

The bill will provide Spokane residents and businesses an estimated \$14 million over four years in Climate Commitment Act compliance cost savings and work toward a path to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. No-cost allowances to cover much of the facility's emissions over the next four years are provided.

Additionally, the bill requires that 40 percent of auction proceeds be allocated to a consignment account to be spent on projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Waste to Energy facility.