How does our transportation system impact public health, climate, and the economy?

Our transportation system - how we move people and goods from point A to point B - significantly impacts public health, the economy, and our climate. Cars, trucks, and buses release tailpipe pollution that cause respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, and other serious health problems, and transportation is the top source of carbon emissions in the U.S. A just and zero emission transportation system must be part of the solution to secure clean air and prevent the worst effects of climate change, especially for communities of color and low income communities. The transition toward a zero emission transportation system will also require new training and extensive infrastructure investments, which have the potential to generate high quality jobs for those most in need.

What is the Transportation and Climate Initiative?

The Transportation and Climate Initiative or TCI is a collaboration of 12 Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast Governors and the Mayor of D.C. who are working together to develop a regional program with the goals of cutting tailpipe pollution and building a fair and just zero-emission transportation system. The program, called the Transportation and Climate Initiative Program (TCI-P), is a “cap-and-invest” system that will cut emissions from our transportation system and raise new funds for solutions in communities who are disproportionately impacted by pollution and inadequate access to reliable, affordable transportation options. As of December 2020, four initial jurisdictions (CT, DC, MA, RI) have signed onto the program, with eight other states (DE, MD, NC, NJ, NY, PA, VT, and VA) that are involved and considering joining. Learn more here: www.thedreamcorps.org/tci

How does the TCI-P work?

Under the TCI-P, jurisdictions place a limit, or ‘cap’ on carbon emissions from the transportation sector across the region. Fuel producers and distributors must purchase permits called ‘allowances’ to pay for the pollution created by their fuel. Over time, the pollution cap declines and the cost to pollute increases. If all jurisdictions participate, the program is projected to generate $2 billion dollars or more annually, with up to $700 million reserved for communities hit worst by poverty, pollution, and the COVID-19 crisis.
**POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TCI-P**

TCI-P is meant to raise funds to invest in solutions like accessible, reliable transit, affordable housing near transit, air quality monitoring, safe biking paths, and battery-electric trucks and buses. The program includes key components to ensure equity: participating jurisdictions must **dedicate a minimum of 35% of funds** to the communities who need it the most, **monitor air quality** in pollution-burdened communities, and report on the impacts of the program, including how funds are spent. Participating jurisdictions must also **develop community advisory boards** that have majority representation from disproportionately impacted communities. These advisory boards will have robust opportunities to shape the program, including developing criteria to define which communities should be prioritized to receive funds, making recommendations on investments, and creating evaluation metrics to assess whether the program is benefitting disproportionately impacted communities.

**POTENTIAL CONCERNS OF TCI-P**

TCI-P is designed to lower emissions across the region as a whole but not to directly address local pollution hotspots where air quality is worst. Additional targeted measures are needed to significantly reduce disparities in pollution exposure. Also, market flexibilities in the program may prevent it from achieving robust emission reductions. For instance, the program has a mechanism that limits how high the allowance price may rise, which weakens the pressure on polluters to take bold action to reduce their pollution. Another potential concern of the program is that fuel companies will likely pass the price of carbon onto drivers. This would raise gas prices by $0.05-0.09 per gallon, which is less than normal gas price fluctuations in a year. Key safeguards are needed to ensure disproportionately impacted communities have a meaningful say in and directly benefit from the program.

**HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

In 2021, TCI states are developing a model rule at the regional level and the first four jurisdictions can begin to adopt state legislation or regulation. Funds from the program will be generated as early as 2023. You can get involved by sharing more information with your community and providing public feedback to influence how the program gets developed at the regional level and adopted in your state! Learn more at: [www.thedreamcorps.org/tci](http://www.thedreamcorps.org/tci)