



## **CLIMATE: Inslee introduces black carbon reduction bill**

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**Sara Goodman, E&E reporter**

Rep. Jay Inslee (D-Wash.) yesterday introduced legislation to reduce soot emissions, which experts have called an important short-term fix for global warming.

Black carbon -- which is made of particulate soot matter from diesel engines, biomass burning and rural cooking -- is the second-leading source of U.S. emissions causing global warming, trailing only carbon dioxide. Like CO<sub>2</sub>, the tiny, dark particles of soot absorb sunlight, trapping heat in the atmosphere.

Reducing black carbon can have a quick impact on climate mitigation because it is so short-lived, experts say, remaining in the environment for just one to four weeks, compared with CO<sub>2</sub>, which lasts up to 43 years.

In addition to the environmental concerns, black carbon also threatens human health, studies show. Fine particles in diesel exhaust can pass through the nose and throat and lodge in the lungs. The particles can aggravate allergies and asthma or cause other serious health problems including lung cancer, according to U.S. EPA.

The bill calls on EPA to study black carbon to assess its climate and public health impacts, determine the major sources and develop strategies for reducing domestic black carbon emissions. It also requires that the agency report to Congress on how to help other countries reduce emissions.

"The great promise of this bill is the potential to reduce warming quickly," said Durwood Zaelke, president of the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development, in a statement.

"Reducing emissions of short-lived climate forcers such as black carbon is the only means of minimizing warming in the short term, so these actions are essential complements to reducing carbon dioxide emissions."

Reps. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and Mike Honda (D-Calif.) cosponsored the bill.