

**WSPTA recognizes that climate change is an immediate health crisis for all children and youth. We have the moral responsibility to act now to mitigate the negative effects of climate change.**

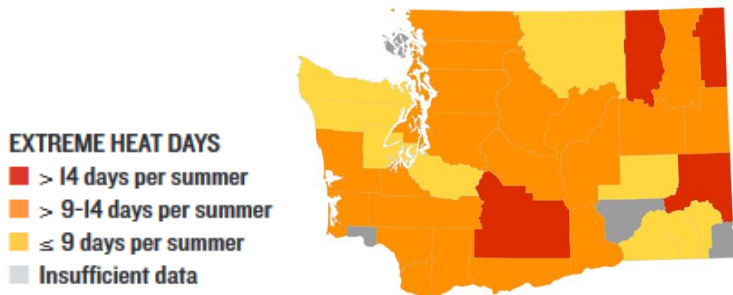
### Background

- Children are more vulnerable to climate change because their immune systems, lungs and bodies are still developing. They have a higher metabolism and play outside where there are more dangerous pathogens. Infants and high school athletes are at high risk to extreme heat.<sup>(1)(2)(Image 2)</sup>

#### Vulnerability to the Health Impacts of Climate Change at Different Life Stages



- During the heatwave of 2021, Washington reached our highest recorded temperature of 120°F!
- Some families are more impacted by “fire, flood, drought, or extreme heat because of where they live or work. How well a family or community bounces back from climate events can be affected by poverty, language barriers, and access to healthcare and insurance.” -*UW Climate Impacts Group*<sup>(3)(Image 4)</sup>



“Extreme heat days” are defined as June, July, and August days from 2007 to 2016 on which the maximum temperature at a given weather station fell within the top 10 percent of readings made at that station from 1961 to 1990. Nine extreme heat days per summer, on average, would be expected if temperatures were not increasing over time.” -*Natural Resources Defense Council*<sup>(4)</sup>

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#### For More Information

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**For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website.**

“My life expectancy could be shortened because of how rapidly the climate is warming.”

- 14-year-old Lilah Amon-Lucas, at the September 2019 Youth Climate Strike (YCS) in Seattle<sup>(5)</sup>

“Minority groups and people of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to live in environmentally hazardous areas and experience asthma, heart attacks and premature death.

They’re directly feeling the effects of climate change more than their white counterparts. Black and brown lungs matter.”  
- Parisa Harvey, a 15-year-old YCS organizer<sup>(5)</sup>

## Proposed Solutions

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that build a socially, economically, and environmentally resilient world for children and youth by:

- Providing education, funding, planning, and implementation resources to schools and communities to promote sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Equitably mitigating adverse climate change impacts.
- Declaring climate change a public health crisis in order to implement policies and solutions that strengthen public health and health care infrastructure, direct funding, and raise awareness about the health impacts of climate change.<sup>(6)</sup>

## Citations

- (1) Samantha Ahdoot, MD, FAAP, et al. “Global Climate Change and Children’s Health.” *Pediatrics*. AAP. November 2015. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/136/5/e1468>
- (2) Gamble, J.L., et al. 2016: Ch. 9: Populations of Concern. *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment*. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, 247–286. <https://health2016.globalchange.gov/populations-concern>
- (3) UW Climate Impacts Group. “An Unfair Share: Climate Change Hits Some Harder Than Others.” UW. [https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/AnUnfairShare\\_GraphicSummary.pdf](https://cig.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/AnUnfairShare_GraphicSummary.pdf)
- (4) Natural Resources Defense Council. “Climate Change and Health in Washington.” September 2019. <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/climate-change-health-impacts-washington-ib.pdf>
- (5) Evan Bush. “‘The youth are watching’: Global Climate Strike draws students, adult allies to Friday demonstrations in Seattle.” *Seattle Times*. September 20, 2019. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/the-youth-are-watching-global-climate-strike-to-draw-students-adult-allies-to-friday-demonstrations/>
- (6) Emma Bascom. “AMA: Climate change is a public health crisis.” *Healio*. June 14, 2022. <https://www.healio.com/news/primary-care/20220614/ama-climate-change-is-a-public-health-crisis>