

# Jean Godden—four years of missed opportunities: A closer look at the Godden “record”

**CLAIM:** Jean Godden’s efforts made Seattle City Light the only greenhouse gas-neutral utility in the country.

**FACT:** Former Mayor Paul Schell started the drive to offset emissions at City Light in 2001. By the time Jean Godden got elected to the Council in 2003, the city had made significant progress toward this goal. According to one environmentalist who attended the press conference at which Schell announced his initiative, Godden merely ended up in the right place at the right time to claim credit.

**CLAIM:** As a staunch environmentalist, Godden supports increasing transportation alternatives to get people out of cars and supports the Regional Transportation Investment District’s (RTID) transportation proposals.

**FACT:** Groups like the Sierra Club steadfastly oppose RTID because it “traps us in a future of more cars on the roads, more car-dependent development, and constantly increasing emissions.” At a time when gridlock is killing our quality of life, RTID’s solution is to lay 74 miles of additional pavement. RTID holds the development of transit alternatives hostage to road construction and will totally fail to address our need to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. Godden also supported the Mayor’s \$5 billion tunnel replacement boondoggle that would have built an underground highway next to an earthquake fault.

**CLAIM:** Godden led the passage of the Critical Areas Ordinance to protect sensitive areas.

**FACT:** Seattle’s Critical Areas Ordinance has existed since 1992. Godden did **not** pass the Critical Areas Ordinance, she had it amended. Additionally, many observers sensed that Councilman Conlin did much of the work to ensure that amendments’ passage. While she does deserve credit for supporting a strengthening of the law, many environmental groups expressed dissatisfaction about the extent to which the amendments protected areas essential for marine life. Other organizations and concerned citizens criticized them for ignoring the impact natural disasters may have on ecologically sensitive areas.

**CLAIM:** Godden supports a ban on Styrofoam to obviate the need for a new garbage transfer station in Georgetown.

**CLARIFICATION:** We applaud Jean Godden for her position. Unfortunately, if passed, such a ban would serve as a small step forward. Other U.S. cities such as San Francisco and even Salt Lake City, Utah have already surpassed Seattle in such environmental initiatives. We need to make Seattle a leader again.

**SUMMARY:** As Chair of the committee focused on energy and the environment on the Seattle City Council, Jean Godden has not used her position to take the needed steps to address serious environmental concerns. Her term has been one of missed opportunities. Joe Szwaja will use his position on the City Council to work toward a more livable city and sustainable world.

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