

---

HOUSE BILL 2654

---

State of Washington                      63rd Legislature                      2014 Regular Session

By Representatives Seaquist and Pollet

Read first time 01/23/14. Referred to Committee on Environment.

1            AN ACT Relating to codifying the existence of the climate impacts  
2 group without making modifications to its current mission; and adding  
3 a new chapter to Title 28B RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds the following:

6            (a) Climatic conditions affect the property, economy, natural  
7 resources, environment, and the lives of the citizens of the state of  
8 Washington, including agriculture, wine making, tourism, skiing,  
9 recreational and commercial fishing, forestry, hydropower generation,  
10 public health and safety, and the durability and performance of  
11 infrastructure and the built environment, and are therefore of  
12 importance to the state's workers, consumers, businesses, industries,  
13 and residents.

14            (b) Washington has experienced ongoing variations in climate and  
15 extreme weather events that cause droughts and floods, and affects  
16 natural hazards, resource availability, public safety, and diverse  
17 economic sectors.

18            (c) Regardless of its genesis, climate change is expected to have  
19 significant impacts in the Pacific Northwest region in the near and

1 long-term future including, among other things: Increased  
2 temperatures, declining snowpack, more frequent heavy rainfall and  
3 flooding, receding glaciers, changes in the timing of streamflows and  
4 water supply and demand, extreme or unusual weather events, rising sea  
5 levels, increased risks to public health, declining salmon populations,  
6 increased drought, risk of forest fires and forest insect outbreaks,  
7 altered reliability of transportation interconnections, and the  
8 durability and performance of infrastructure and the built environment.

9 (d) There is a need to continue to gather and analyze information  
10 related to climate risk reduction that will help guide prudent steps to  
11 be taken to avoid, mitigate, or respond to climate impacts, protect our  
12 communities, and assist in maximizing public infrastructure  
13 investments.

14 (e) The University of Washington climate impacts group has  
15 contributed to much of the knowledge base and provides much of the  
16 state's existing capacity to identify and assess potential climate  
17 risks and, since 1995, has provided Washington and the region with  
18 impartial and actionable research, data, tools, and technical advice to  
19 support assessment and prioritization of climate risks and to identify  
20 and fill knowledge gaps.

21 (f) The University of Washington climate impacts group has had many  
22 noteworthy accomplishments, such as:

23 (i) Developing the first comprehensive assessment of climate  
24 impacts on the state of Washington and identifying climate change  
25 consequences of practical concern;

26 (ii) Developing and publicly providing a comprehensive suite of  
27 data showing past and potential future climate and hydrologic  
28 conditions for locations across the state to support climate risk  
29 assessment and long-range planning that has been used in long-range  
30 planning efforts by entities such as the United States bureau of  
31 reclamation, the United States army corps of engineers, Bonneville  
32 power administration, and Seattle city light;

33 (iii) Providing data, tools, and technical guidance to support  
34 climate risk assessment activities by state agencies, including the  
35 departments of ecology, natural resources, fish and wildlife,  
36 transportation, and health, along with the office of the attorney  
37 general and numerous local, tribal, and federal entities within the  
38 region; and

1 (iv) Addressing climate-related issues using methods and approaches  
2 that transcend the expertise and mission of the individual departments,  
3 colleges, centers, and institutes of the University of Washington by  
4 providing the structure and continuity for the integrated,  
5 interdisciplinary approach needed to address these complex issues.

6 (2) It is the intent of the legislature for the climate impacts  
7 group to continue to provide the structure and continuity needed by  
8 continuing to draw contributions from the associated departments and  
9 colleges of the University of Washington into a more consolidated,  
10 collaborative, interdisciplinary, and integrated process that is  
11 responsive to the critical climate risks and opportunities facing  
12 sectors of importance to the state of Washington and to continue to  
13 work with the various interests concerned with these and other climate  
14 sensitive sectors of the state, including the legislature, state and  
15 federal governments, environmental organizations, local communities,  
16 business and industry, and tribes, to improve these entities' ability  
17 to thrive in the context of ongoing climate variability and change. It  
18 is not the intent of the legislature to change or affect in any way the  
19 ongoing work and mission of the climate impacts group.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The climate impacts group may be  
21 administratively housed by the University of Washington, consistent  
22 with this chapter, and is subject to the authority of the board of  
23 regents of the university. Nothing in this section requires the  
24 University of Washington to maintain the climate impacts group or  
25 provide direct financial support to the climate impacts group.

26 (2) The climate impacts group must be administered by the director  
27 of the group as appointed by the dean of the college of the environment  
28 at the University of Washington.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The climate impacts group should strive  
30 to serve as a centralized, interdisciplinary resource for the state of  
31 Washington to study and assist in the understanding of the effects and  
32 impacts of natural climate variability and global climate change by  
33 focusing on the intersection of climate science and public policy and  
34 resource management.

35 (2) Examples of the role of the climate impacts group may include,  
36 but are not limited to:

1 (a) Pursuing coordinated research and education related to climate  
2 risks and opportunities for various sectors in Washington;

3 (b) Developing, delivering, and supporting the use of relevant  
4 scientific and technical information about climate impacts on  
5 Washington's ecology, economy, and society, and the scientific  
6 implications of alternative response options;

7 (c) Serving as a credible and expert source of climate information  
8 for state and local decision makers and agencies working on drought,  
9 flooding, climate change, and other related issues;

10 (d) Collaborating with and leveraging efforts of other existing  
11 climate-related state resources;

12 (e) Conducting and reporting on studies of climate phenomena of  
13 significant socioeconomic importance to the state;

14 (f) Supporting state agencies and local governments in developing  
15 strategies to prepare for, and to respond to, the effects of climate  
16 variability and change on natural and human systems; and

17 (g) Tracking and evaluating ongoing climate adaptation efforts such  
18 as:

19 (i) Economic, environmental, health, and social assessments of  
20 global warming impacts on Washington and the Pacific Northwest; and

21 (ii) Local and regional efforts to prepare for the effects of a  
22 changing climate.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The climate impacts group may maintain  
24 areas of focus related to the purposes of this chapter.

25 (2) Examples of appropriate areas of focus may include, but are not  
26 limited to:

27 (a) Water resources, the natural and managed water supply, water  
28 demand, water shortages, and extreme water-related events such as  
29 droughts and floods;

30 (b) The potential impacts of sea level rise and the implications of  
31 alternative approaches for addressing these impacts on the state's  
32 shoreline areas, including potential increases in storm surge and  
33 coastal flooding, increased erosion, and loss of habitat and ecosystem  
34 function; and

35 (c) Evaluation of the economic, ecological, and societal dimensions  
36 of climate risks, opportunities, and response strategies in both the  
37 rural and urban environments, and for sectors including:

- 1 (i) Water and energy demand and supplies; and  
2 (ii) Infrastructure, transportation, health, ecology, natural  
3 resources, and agricultural systems.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The climate impacts group must, when  
5 appropriate to achieving the purposes of this chapter, cooperate and  
6 coordinate with other entities to fulfill its objectives.

7 (2) Examples of entities that the climate impacts group should  
8 cooperate and coordinate with may include, but are not limited to:

- 9 (a) Other universities and other colleges within the University of  
10 Washington;  
11 (b) Local, state, and federal governments;  
12 (c) Public advocacy organizations;  
13 (d) Tribal agencies, organizations, and governments; and  
14 (e) Domestic or foreign industrial and business institutions.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** State agencies and local governments are  
16 encouraged to contract with the climate impacts group to fulfill agency  
17 needs regarding the collection, storage, integration, analysis,  
18 dissemination, interpretation, application, and monitoring of climate  
19 change information, research, and training.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The results of any research funded by the  
21 state that is undertaken by the climate impacts group or in which the  
22 climate impacts group participates must be available to all industries  
23 and citizens of the state of Washington and the climate impacts group  
24 is authorized to disseminate this information.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** (1) The climate impacts group may solicit  
26 gifts, grants, conveyances, bequests, and devices, including both real  
27 or personal property, in trust or otherwise, to be directed to the  
28 climate impacts group for carrying out the objectives of the climate  
29 impacts group as provided in this chapter.

30 (2) In addition to section 6 of this act, the climate impacts group  
31 may solicit contracts for work, financial and in-kind contributions,  
32 and support from private industries, interest groups, federal, state,  
33 and tribal sources, and other sources deemed appropriate by the  
34 director of the climate impacts group.

1 (3) The climate impacts group may utilize separately appropriated  
2 funds of the University of Washington for the climate impacts group  
3 operations and activities.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** (1) The director of the climate impacts  
5 group may, at the discretion of the director, appoint and maintain a  
6 policy advisory committee to advise the director on policies for the  
7 climate impacts group that are consistent with the purposes of this  
8 chapter.

9 (2) If activated, the membership of the policy advisory committee  
10 must represent, to the extent possible, the various interests concerned  
11 with the climate impacts group, including state and federal agencies,  
12 tribal governments, conservation and environmental organizations, urban  
13 entities, rural communities, industry, and business.

14 (3) Members of the policy advisory committee may not receive any  
15 salary or other compensation for service on the advisory committee.  
16 However, each member may be compensated, at the discretion of the  
17 director of the climate impacts group, for each day in actual  
18 attendance at or traveling to and from meetings of the advisory  
19 committee in accordance with RCW 43.03.220, together with travel  
20 expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** Sections 1 through 9 of this act constitute  
22 a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

--- END ---