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## Environment & Energy Committee

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### HB 2311

**Brief Description:** Amending state greenhouse gas emission limits for consistency with the most recent assessment of climate change science.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Slatter and Fitzgibbon; by request of Governor Inslee.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies state greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets to 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, 70 percent below 1990 levels by 2040, and 95 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Modifies state government greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets to 45 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, 70 percent below 2005 levels by 2040, and 95 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.
- Establishes a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2050 for state government and for the state as a whole.
- Directs the Departments of Ecology and Commerce to include certain additional information in their biennial greenhouse gas emissions report to the Governor and the Legislature, including the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions from wildfires in the state and the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions from key sectors of the economy.
- Requires state agencies to report on their short-term and long-term strategies for meeting greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
- Establishes that it is the policy of the state to promote the removal of excess carbon from the atmosphere through carbon sequestration activities.

**Hearing Date:** 1/14/20

**Staff:** Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

## **Background:**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) identify carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride as greenhouse gases because of their capacity to trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere. Under the federal Clean Air Act, greenhouse gases are regulated as an air pollutant and are subject to several air regulations administered by the EPA. At the state level, greenhouse gases are regulated by Ecology under the state Clean Air Act.

In 2008, Washington enacted legislation that set a series of limits on the emission of greenhouse gases within the state. Ecology is responsible for monitoring and tracking the state's progress toward the emission limits.

The state's current limits on the emission of greenhouse gases are:

- By 2020, overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state must be reduced to 1990 levels.
- By 2035, overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state must be reduced to 25 percent below 1990 levels.
- By 2050, overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state must be reduced to 50 percent below 1990 levels or 70 percent below the state's expected emissions for that year.

The same legislation also established limits on the emission of greenhouse gases from state agencies, as follows:

- By 2020, reduce emissions by 15 percent from 2005 emission levels.
- By 2035, reduce emissions to 36 percent below 2005 levels.
- By 2050, reduce emissions by the greater of 57.5 percent below 2005 levels, or 70 percent below the expected state government emissions for that year.

As part of the 2008 legislation, Ecology and the Department of Commerce are required to submit a biennial report on the state's greenhouse gas emissions. The 2008 legislation also required Ecology to consult with the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington within 18 months of each global or national assessment of climate change science, and to provide a report to the Legislature summarizing that science and making recommendations regarding whether the state's greenhouse gas emissions reduction requirements need to be updated.

Ecology's most recent such report was issued in 2019 and recommended the following greenhouse gas emissions limits:

- By 2020, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 1990 levels.
- By 2030, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state to 45 percent below 1990 levels.
- By 2040, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state to 70 percent below 1990 levels.
- By 2050, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state to 95 percent below 1990 levels and achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the state.

## **Summary of Bill:**

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions.

Washington must limit emission of greenhouse gases to achieve the following reductions for the state:

- By 2020, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 1990 levels.
- By 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 45 percent below 1990 levels.
- By 2040, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 70 percent below 1990 levels.
- By 2050, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 95 percent below 1990 levels and achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

State agencies must achieve the following greenhouse gas emissions reductions:

- By 2020, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15 percent from 2005 emission levels.
- By 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 45 percent below 2005 levels.
- By 2040, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 70 percent below 2005 levels.
- By 2050, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions to 95 percent below 2005 levels, and achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by state government as a whole.

### Reporting Requirements.

The greenhouse gas emissions reporting conducted by the Department of Commerce (Commerce) and the Department of Ecology (Ecology) should include both statewide emissions as well as emissions from key sectors of the economy, including electricity, transportation, buildings, manufacturing, and agriculture. The reporting must also include greenhouse gas emissions from wildfires, developed in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources.

By June 1 of each even-numbered year beginning in 2022, state agencies must report to Ecology, and to the State Efficiency and Environmental Performance office at Commerce, the following:

- the actions planned for the next two biennia to meet emissions reduction targets;
- the actions taken to date to meet emissions reduction targets; and
- the agency's long-term strategy for meeting emissions reduction targets.

Ecology and Commerce must compile the agency reports described above and, by December 1 of each even-numbered year beginning in 2022, provide a consolidated report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature that includes recommendations for budgetary and other actions that will assist the state agencies in achieving the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

### Carbon Sequestration.

It is established as the policy of the state to promote the removal of excess carbon from the atmosphere through carbon sequestration activities, in amounts necessary to meet the state's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. All agencies of state government must seek all practicable opportunities to cost-effectively maximize carbon sequestration.

Carbon sequestration is defined to mean the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide through biologic, chemical, geologic, or physical processes.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 8, 2020.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.