
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1899

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By House Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Volz, Schmidt, Chapman, Graham, Rule, Leavitt, Waters, Low, Christian, Couture, McClintock, Barnard, Jacobsen, Timmons, Schmick, Dent, Cheney, Sandlin, and Griffey)

READ FIRST TIME 01/30/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to facilitating reconstruction of communities
2 damaged or destroyed by wildfires; amending RCW 70A.65.260; adding a
3 new section to chapter 43.31 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** In recent years, devastating wildfires
6 have destroyed homes, businesses, and infrastructure. These wildfires
7 have become more frequent and more destructive due to the effects of
8 climate change. Since the original construction of many of the lost
9 structures, technological advances have made possible more energy
10 efficient buildings, greater use of electric vehicles, and more
11 opportunities to utilize solar energy. The insurance coverage for the
12 destroyed structures, however, may not cover reconstruction utilizing
13 new methods and technologies. As a result, many buildings may be
14 rebuilt in less efficient ways that require greater use of greenhouse
15 gases. These greenhouse gases, in turn, will exacerbate the threat of
16 wildfires.

17 It is the intent of the legislature to assist in disrupting this
18 cycle. By making grants available to local governments, businesses,
19 and individuals to repair or replace damaged or destroyed buildings
20 in more energy efficient and environmentally friendly ways, the
21 legislature will encourage a more sustainable use of resources and

1 increased climate resilience with resulting environmental benefits
2 for all of the people of the state.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 70A.65.260 and 2023 c 475 s 939 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 (1) The climate commitment account is created in the state
6 treasury. The account must receive moneys distributed to the account
7 from the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250. Moneys
8 in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Projects,
9 activities, and programs eligible for funding from the account must
10 be physically located in Washington state and include, but are not
11 limited to, the following:

12 (a) Implementing the working families' tax credit in RCW
13 82.08.0206;

14 (b) Supplementing the growth management planning and
15 environmental review fund established in RCW 36.70A.490 for the
16 purpose of making grants or loans to local governments for the
17 purposes set forth in RCW 43.21C.240, 43.21C.031, 36.70A.500, and
18 36.70A.600, for costs associated with RCW 36.70A.610, and to cover
19 costs associated with the adoption of optional elements of
20 comprehensive plans consistent with RCW 43.21C.420;

21 (c) Programs, activities, or projects that reduce and mitigate
22 impacts from greenhouse gases and copollutants in overburdened
23 communities, including strengthening the air quality monitoring
24 network to measure, track, and better understand air pollution levels
25 and trends and to inform the analysis, monitoring, and pollution
26 reduction measures required in RCW 70A.65.020;

27 (d) Programs, activities, or projects that deploy renewable
28 energy resources, such as solar and wind power, and projects to
29 deploy distributed generation, energy storage, demand-side
30 technologies and strategies, and other grid modernization projects;

31 (e) Programs, activities, or projects that increase the energy
32 efficiency or reduce greenhouse gas emissions of industrial
33 facilities including, but not limited to, proposals to implement
34 combined heat and power, district energy, or on-site renewables, such
35 as solar and wind power, to upgrade the energy efficiency of existing
36 equipment, to reduce process emissions, and to switch to less
37 emissions intensive fuel sources;

1 (f) Programs, activities, or projects that achieve energy
2 efficiency or emissions reductions in the agricultural sector
3 including:

4 (i) Fertilizer management;

5 (ii) Soil management;

6 (iii) Bioenergy;

7 (iv) Biofuels;

8 (v) Grants, rebates, and other financial incentives for
9 agricultural harvesting equipment, heavy duty trucks, agricultural
10 pump engines, tractors, and other equipment used in agricultural
11 operations;

12 (vi) Grants, loans, or any financial incentives to food
13 processors to implement projects that reduce greenhouse gas
14 emissions;

15 (vii) Renewable energy projects;

16 (viii) Farmworker housing weatherization programs;

17 (ix) Dairy digester research and development;

18 (x) Alternative manure management; and

19 (xi) Eligible fund uses under RCW 89.08.615;

20 (g) Programs, activities, or projects that increase energy
21 efficiency in new and existing buildings, or that promote low carbon
22 architecture, including use of newly emerging alternative building
23 materials that result in a lower carbon footprint in the built
24 environment over the life cycle of the building and component
25 building materials;

26 (h) Programs, activities, or projects that promote the
27 electrification and decarbonization of new and existing buildings,
28 including residential, commercial, and industrial buildings;

29 (i) Programs, activities, or projects that improve energy
30 efficiency, including district energy, and investments in market
31 transformation of high efficiency electric appliances and equipment
32 for space and water heating;

33 (j) Clean energy transition and assistance programs, activities,
34 or projects that assist affected workers or people with lower incomes
35 during the transition to a clean energy economy, or grow and expand
36 clean manufacturing capacity in communities across Washington state
37 including, but not limited to:

38 (i) Programs, activities, or projects that directly improve
39 energy affordability and reduce the energy burden of people with
40 lower incomes, as well as the higher transportation fuel burden of

1 rural residents, such as bill assistance, energy efficiency, and
2 weatherization programs;

3 (ii) Community renewable energy projects that allow qualifying
4 participants to own or receive the benefits of those projects at
5 reduced or no cost;

6 (iii) Programs, activities, or other worker-support projects for
7 bargaining unit and nonsupervisory fossil fuel workers who are
8 affected by the transition away from fossil fuels to a clean energy
9 economy. Worker support may include, but is not limited to: (A) Full
10 wage replacement, health benefits, and pension contributions for
11 every worker within five years of retirement; (B) full wage
12 replacement, health benefits, and pension contributions for every
13 worker with at least one year of service for each year of service up
14 to five years of service; (C) wage insurance for up to five years for
15 workers reemployed who have more than five years of service; (D) up
16 to two years of retraining costs, including tuition and related
17 costs, based on in-state community and technical college costs; (E)
18 peer counseling services during transition; (F) employment placement
19 services, prioritizing employment in the clean energy sector; and (G)
20 relocation expenses;

21 (iv) Direct investment in workforce development, via technical
22 education, community college, institutions of higher education,
23 apprenticeships, and other programs including, but not limited to:

24 (A) Initiatives to develop a forest health workforce established
25 under RCW 76.04.521; and

26 (B) Initiatives to develop new education programs, emerging
27 fields, or jobs pertaining to the clean energy economy;

28 (v) Transportation, municipal service delivery, and technology
29 investments that increase a community's capacity for clean
30 manufacturing, with an emphasis on communities in greatest need of
31 job creation and economic development and potential for commute
32 reduction;

33 (k) Programs, activities, or projects that reduce emissions from
34 landfills and waste-to-energy facilities through diversion of organic
35 materials, methane capture or conversion strategies, installation of
36 gas collection devices and gas control systems, monitoring and
37 reporting of methane emissions, or other means, prioritizing funding
38 needed for any activities by local governments to comply with chapter
39 70A.540 RCW;

1 (1) Carbon dioxide removal projects, programs, and activities;
2 ((and))

3 (m) Activities to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to the
4 effects of climate change affecting Indian tribes, including capital
5 investments in support of the relocation of Indian tribes located in
6 areas at heightened risk due to anticipated sea level rise, flooding,
7 or other disturbances caused by climate change. The legislature
8 intends to dedicate at least \$50,000,000 per biennium from the
9 account for purposes of this subsection; and

10 (n) Providing grants under section 3 of this act for the purpose
11 of assisting individuals, local governments, and businesses
12 rebuilding from losses due to wildfires in meeting current energy
13 code efficiency standards, increasing electric vehicle charging
14 capacity, and increasing solar installations in new or rebuilt
15 buildings.

16 (2) Moneys in the account may not be used for projects or
17 activities that would violate tribal treaty rights or result in
18 significant long-term damage to critical habitat or ecological
19 functions. Investments from this account must result in long-term
20 environmental benefits and increased resilience to the impacts of
21 climate change.

22 (3) During the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, the legislature may
23 appropriate moneys from the climate commitment account for activities
24 related to environmental justice, including implementation of chapter
25 314, Laws of 2021.

26 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 43.31
27 RCW to read as follows:

28 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
29 specific purpose, the department of commerce shall establish and
30 administer a grant program to provide assistance to qualifying
31 property owners and local governments that had buildings destroyed or
32 damaged in a wildfire after January 1, 2023. The department shall
33 provide, by rule, for a system for the submission and evaluation of
34 grant applications, and for ensuring that the grants are only used
35 for the purposes specified in this section.

36 (2) Grants may only be awarded to property owners who had
37 buildings damaged or destroyed during a wildfire and that meet the
38 following criteria:

1 (a) The area in which the building was damaged or destroyed was
2 under a state of emergency declared by the governor or a local
3 government due to wildfires at the time the building was destroyed;

4 (b) The building that was damaged or destroyed was a residential
5 home, including manufactured homes, a multifamily building, a
6 commercial building, or a public building;

7 (c) The same type of building as was damaged or destroyed in the
8 wildfire is being constructed or repaired; and

9 (d) The new or repaired building will comply with all current
10 state building and state energy code requirements in effect at the
11 time of the permit application for the construction or repair.

12 (3) Grants awarded under this section may only be used for the
13 purpose of meeting increased energy efficiency standards, providing
14 or increasing electric vehicle charging capacity, and the
15 installation and use of solar panels on a building that did not,
16 prior to being damaged or destroyed, utilize solar panels.

17 (4) The department shall develop criteria for awarding grants
18 under this section, and must prioritize any building that is owned or
19 rented by a low-income to moderate-income household. Thereafter, the
20 department must award grants based upon the amount of energy
21 efficiency, electric vehicle charging capacity, or solar panels
22 installation that will occur, with grants going first to those
23 buildings which will yield the greatest environmental benefits.

24 (5) For the purposes of this section:

25 (a) "Increased energy efficiency standards" means energy code
26 standards under chapter 19.27A RCW that have increased between the
27 time the building was originally constructed and the time that it is
28 to be repaired or rebuilt.

29 (b) "Local government" means a city, town, county, or special
30 purpose district.

31 (c) "Low-income or moderate-income household" means a single
32 person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted
33 income is at or below 120 percent of the median household income
34 adjusted for household size, for the county where the household is
35 located, as reported by the United States department of housing and
36 urban development.

37 (d) "Public building" means a building or building wholly owned
38 and used by a local government.

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