
HOUSE BILL 2298

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Reeves and Doglio

Read first time 01/11/24. Referred to Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a climate resilience and
2 environmental equity campus; amending RCW 43.52.391; adding a new
3 section to chapter 43.30 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.10
4 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that
7 foresight and opportunity have defined the acquisition and
8 realization of many of Washington's most significant cultural and
9 educational assets. Without a vision for the future, and the
10 willingness and means to pursue that vision, our state would not
11 enjoy the benefits of world-class public universities, breathtaking
12 state parks and lands, publicly owned forests and shorelines, a
13 beautiful capital campus, and numerous other resources.

14 (2) The legislature recognizes also that opportunities to
15 meaningfully expand the state's cultural and educational portfolio
16 are neither frequent nor easily accomplished, but that the dividends
17 from the investments exceed the necessary efforts.

18 (3) One such opportunity exists in 2024: The purchase and
19 revisioning of the Weyerhaeuser company's former corporate
20 headquarters. The suburban location, with its unique architectural
21 value and convenient access to the central Puget Sound region,

1 presents a scope of possibility that has seldom occurred in
2 Washington's history.

3 (4) The timing of this possibility, while never without
4 challenges, is appropriate and befitting for a truly urgent need: The
5 unprecedented environmental and social issues facing our society and
6 planet demand commensurate and well-reasoned responses by
7 policymakers. The time for an accessible and innovative climate
8 resilience education center and environmental equity hub that is
9 driven and shaped by diverse public and private partnerships, has
10 arrived.

11 (5) While the full and best use of the Weyerhaeuser company's
12 former corporate headquarters will depend upon the creativity and
13 innovation of future residents and leaders, the legislature intends
14 to secure a broad slate of possibilities for the location by
15 purchasing the site and initiating an inclusionary process for
16 maximizing its cultural and educational value for all Washingtonians.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.30
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the
20 department shall acquire land in southern King county, at the
21 junction of a state highway and an interstate highway, that is
22 suitable for the purpose of creating and operating the climate
23 resilience and environmental equity campus established in section 3
24 of this act.

25 (2) The department is granted all authority necessary to operate
26 the climate resilience and environmental equity campus for the
27 purpose of complying with the objectives of the campus as established
28 in section 3 of this act.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
30 RCW to read as follows:

31 (1) A climate resilience and environmental equity campus must be
32 established by the department of natural resources and Highline
33 Community College to do the following:

34 (a) Provide workforce training for postsecondary students
35 pursuing careers in climate-focused science, technology, engineering,
36 and mathematics through on-site training and internships in science,
37 technology, engineering, mathematics, social justice, community
38 engagement, and civic skills;

1 (b) Develop a climate-focused program and curriculum for
2 postsecondary students that includes training in science, technology,
3 engineering, and mathematics as well as social justice, collaborative
4 decision making, ethical climate engagement, and community and civic
5 engagement that results in a certificate upon completion; and

6 (c) Provide informational exhibits exploring the various aspects
7 of careers in climate-focused science, technology, engineering, and
8 mathematics.

9 (2) The climate resilience and environmental equity campus shall
10 be operated and administered jointly as an education, training, and
11 research center providing science, technology, engineering,
12 mathematics, and climate-focused career training and education under
13 the authority of Highline Community College and the department of
14 natural resources as a joint operating agency pursuant to RCW
15 43.52.391. The climate resilience and environmental equity campus may
16 be made available to all four-year institutions as defined in RCW
17 28B.10.016 and all community and technical colleges as defined in RCW
18 28B.50.020. Resources for career training may include internships,
19 apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and research opportunities for
20 postsecondary students and faculty.

21 (3) The powers of the joint operating agency are vested in and
22 shall be exercised by a board of directors consisting of nine voting
23 members and a nonvoting chair appointed by the governor. Terms of the
24 initial members must be staggered. The nine voting members shall
25 consist of the following:

26 (a) One member representing Highline Community College;

27 (b) One member representing the department of natural resources;

28 (c) One member representing the public four-year institutions of
29 higher education;

30 (d) One member representing the private institutions of higher
31 education;

32 (e) One member representing the state board for community and
33 technical colleges;

34 (f) One member representing the student achievement council;

35 (g) One member representing local Indian tribes;

36 (h) One member who is an environmental scientist with knowledge
37 in climate resilience; and

38 (i) One member with experience in environmental justice and
39 community and civic engagement.

40 (4) The board of directors shall:

1 (a) Work with science, technology, mathematics, engineering, and
2 climate-focused industry members to develop internships, on-the-job
3 training, research, and other opportunities to provide postsecondary
4 students enrolled in programs with climate-focused science,
5 technology, engineering, and mathematics with direct experience in
6 the industry to provide career and skills training applicable to the
7 industry, including social justice, community engagement, and civic
8 skills;

9 (b) Develop and strengthen college and university-industry
10 relationships through promotion of faculty collaboration with the
11 industry;

12 (c) Encourage a full range of projects from small research
13 projects to large scale, multipartner projects;

14 (d) Work with industry partners to effectively market career
15 opportunities in climate-focused science, technology, engineering,
16 and mathematics in Washington state, to diversify the workforce, and
17 educate the public on the pathways to success in these career fields;
18 and

19 (e) Work with colleges, universities, and industry partners to
20 develop an industry-recognized certificate to be offered to
21 postsecondary students who complete training at the climate
22 resilience and environmental equity campus established in subsection
23 (1) of this section.

24 **Sec. 4.** RCW 43.52.391 and 1982 c 1 s 1 are each amended to read
25 as follows:

26 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, a joint
27 operating agency shall have all powers now or hereafter granted
28 public utility districts under the laws of this state. It shall not
29 acquire nor operate any electric distribution properties nor condemn
30 any properties owned by a public utility which are operated for the
31 generation and transmission of electric power and energy or are being
32 developed for such purposes with due diligence under a valid license
33 or permit, nor purchase or acquire any operating hydroelectric
34 generating plant owned by any city or district on June 11, 1953, or
35 which may be acquired by any city or district by condemnation on or
36 after January 1, 1957, nor levy taxes, issue general obligation
37 bonds, or create subdistricts. It may enter into any contracts,
38 leases or other undertakings deemed necessary or proper and acquire
39 by purchase or condemnation any real or personal property used or

1 useful for its corporate purposes. Actions in eminent domain may be
2 instituted in the superior court of any county in which any of the
3 property sought to be condemned is located and the court in any such
4 action shall have jurisdiction to condemn property wherever located
5 within the state; otherwise such actions shall be governed by the
6 same procedure as now or hereafter provided by law for public utility
7 districts. An operating agency may sell steam or water not required
8 by it for the generation of power and may construct or acquire any
9 facilities it deems necessary for that purpose.

10 (2) An operating agency may make contracts for any term relating
11 to the purchase, sale, interchange or wheeling of power with the
12 government of the United States or any agency thereof and with any
13 municipal corporation or public utility, within or without the state,
14 and may purchase or deliver power anywhere pursuant to any such
15 contract. An operating agency may acquire any coal-bearing lands for
16 the purpose of assuring a long-term, adequate supply of coal to
17 supply its needs, both actual and prospective, for the generation of
18 power and may make such contracts with respect to the extraction,
19 sale or disposal of coal that it deems proper.

20 (3) Any member of an operating agency may advance or contribute
21 funds to an agency as may be agreed upon by the agency and the
22 member, and the agency shall repay such advances or contributions
23 from proceeds of revenue bonds, from operating revenues or from any
24 other funds of the agency, together with interest not to exceed the
25 maximum specified in RCW 43.52.395(1). The legislative body of any
26 member may authorize and make such advances or contributions to an
27 operating agency to assist in a plan for termination of a project or
28 projects, whether or not such member is a participant in such project
29 or projects. Any member who makes such advances or contributions for
30 terminating a project or projects in which it is not a participant
31 shall not assume any liability for any debts or obligations related
32 to the terminated project or projects on account of such advance or
33 contribution.

34 (4) An operating agency may own and operate educational training
35 facilities and centers designed to provide career education and on-
36 the-job experiences.

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