
SENATE BILL 5093

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Senators Rolfes, Lovelett, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Lias, Nguyen, Pedersen, Salomon, Valdez, and Wellman; by request of Department of Ecology

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1 AN ACT Relating to improving climate resilience through updates
2 to the state's integrated climate response strategy; amending RCW
3 70A.05.010, 70A.05.020, 70A.05.030, and 70A.05.040; adding a new
4 section to chapter 70A.05 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 finds that Washington
7 is already experiencing negative community and environmental impacts
8 due to climate change with disproportionate impacts to certain
9 communities and populations and further finds that actions to
10 increase climate resilience, as defined in RCW 70A.65.010, can help
11 prevent and reduce impacts to communities and ecosystems.

12 (2) The legislature further finds that greater cross-agency
13 coordination on resilience, including an updated statewide climate
14 resilience strategy, will help the state: Avoid high costs in the
15 future; address and reduce the highest risks and greatest
16 vulnerabilities; create more efficiencies; better leverage funding;
17 foster more equitable outcomes; and provide for greater
18 accountability.

19 (3) The legislature further finds that RCW 70A.65.050 requires an
20 updated statewide strategy for addressing climate risks and improving
21 resilience of communities and ecosystems. Therefore, the legislature

1 intends to direct the department of ecology to update and modernize
2 the *2012 Integrated Climate Response Plan* with the assistance of
3 other state agencies.

4 (4) The legislature intends for the department of natural
5 resources to continue pursuing climate resilience actions on the
6 public lands they manage and to collaborate with other state agencies
7 in statewide climate resilience efforts.

8 **Sec. 2.** RCW 70A.05.010 and 2009 c 519 s 10 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 (1) The departments of ecology, agriculture, (~~community, trade,~~
11 ~~and economic development~~) commerce, health, fish and wildlife,
12 natural resources, and transportation, the state conservation
13 commission, the Puget Sound partnership, and the emergency management
14 division shall develop an integrated climate change response strategy
15 to better enable the state (~~and local agencies, public and private~~
16 ~~businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals~~) to
17 prepare for, address, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The
18 integrated climate change response strategy should be developed(~~(~~
19 ~~where feasible and consistent with the direction of the strategy,~~)
20 in collaboration with local government agencies and tribal
21 governments with climate change preparation and adaptation plans to
22 the extent feasible.

23 (2) The department of ecology shall serve as a central
24 (~~clearinghouse for relevant scientific and technical information~~
25 ~~about the impacts of climate change on Washington's ecology, economy,~~
26 ~~and society, as well as serve as a central~~) convener for the
27 development of vital programs and necessary policies to help the
28 state adapt to a rapidly changing climate.

29 (3) The department of ecology shall consult and collaborate with,
30 at a minimum, the departments of fish and wildlife, agriculture,
31 (~~community, trade, and economic development~~) commerce, health,
32 natural resources, and transportation, the state conservation
33 commission, the Puget Sound partnership, and the emergency management
34 division in developing and implementing an integrated climate change
35 response strategy and plans of action to prepare for and adapt to
36 climate change impacts. Other state agencies may choose to
37 participate in the process.

38 (4) The department of ecology will engage other relevant state
39 agencies to ensure that other climate resilience actions such as

1 those related to worker safety and community response are
2 incorporated in the updated strategy.

3 (5) In updating the integrated climate response strategy, the
4 department of ecology shall collaborate and engage with local
5 governments, tribal governments, nongovernmental organizations,
6 public and private businesses, and overburdened communities as
7 defined in RCW 70A.02.010. The department of ecology shall also use
8 guidance from the office of equity, the environmental justice
9 council, the community engagement plan adopted under RCW 70A.02.050,
10 and tribal consultation framework adopted under RCW 70A.02.100 to
11 direct agency engagement with historically or currently marginalized
12 groups, overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and tribal
13 governments.

14 (6) (a) The department of ecology shall work with the University
15 of Washington climate impacts group to ensure the state has access to
16 relevant scientific and technical information about the impacts of
17 climate change on Washington's ecology, economy, public health, and
18 society, including a central location for accessing this information
19 and use of any existing climate impact tools.

20 (b) The University of Washington climate impacts group will
21 explore opportunities to partner with other data providers and
22 leverage existing tools that can help further the understanding of
23 climate impacts, such as the department of health's Washington
24 tracking network.

25 **Sec. 3.** RCW 70A.05.020 and 2009 c 519 s 11 are each amended to
26 read as follows:

27 (1) The integrated climate change response strategy should
28 address the impact of and adaptation to climate change, as well as
29 the regional capacity to undertake actions, existing ecosystem and
30 resource management concerns, and health and economic risks. (~~In~~
31 ~~addition, the departments of ecology, agriculture, community, trade,~~
32 ~~and economic development, fish and wildlife, natural resources, and~~
33 ~~transportation should include)) Agencies should consider a range of
34 scenarios and time scales for the purposes of planning in order to
35 assess (~~project vulnerability and, to the extent feasible,~~)
36 vulnerability of state assets and services and inform agency actions
37 to reduce expected risks and increase resiliency to the impacts of
38 climate change.~~

1 (2) (a) By (~~December 1, 2011~~) July 1, 2024, the department of
2 ecology shall compile an (~~initial~~) updated climate change response
3 strategy, including information and data from the departments of fish
4 and wildlife, agriculture, (~~community, trade, and economic~~
5 ~~development~~) commerce, health, natural resources, and
6 transportation, the state conservation commission, the Puget Sound
7 partnership, and the emergency management division that: (~~Summarizes~~
8 ~~the best known science on climate change impacts to Washington;~~
9 ~~assesses Washington's vulnerability to the identified climate change~~
10 ~~impacts; prioritizes~~) Prioritizes solutions that can be implemented
11 within and across state agencies; and identifies recommended funding
12 (~~mechanisms~~) and technical and other essential resources for
13 implementing solutions.

14 (b) The (~~initial~~) strategy must include:

15 (i) (~~Efforts to identify priority planning areas for action,~~
16 ~~based on vulnerability and risk assessments;~~

17 ~~(ii) Barriers challenging state and local governments to take~~
18 ~~action, such as laws, policies, regulations, rules, and procedures~~
19 ~~that require revision to adequately address adaptation to climate~~
20 ~~change;~~

21 ~~(iii) Opportunities to integrate climate science and projected~~
22 ~~impacts into planning and decision making; and~~

23 ~~(iv) Methods to increase public awareness of climate change, its~~
24 ~~projected impacts on the community, and to build support for~~
25 ~~meaningful adaptation policies and strategies)) A summary of each
26 agency's current climate resilience priorities, plans, and actions;~~

27 (ii) Strategies and actions to address the highest climate
28 vulnerabilities and risks to Washington's communities and ecosystems;

29 (iii) A lead agency or group of agencies assigned to implement
30 actions; and

31 (iv) Key gaps to advancing climate resilience actions, including
32 in state laws, policies, regulations, rules, procedures, and agency
33 technical capacity.

34 (c) The strategy must be guided by the following principles:

35 (i) Prioritize actions that both reduce greenhouse gas emissions
36 and build climate preparedness;

37 (ii) Protect the state's most overburdened communities and
38 vulnerable populations and provide more equitable outcomes;

39 (iii) Prioritize actions that deploy natural solutions, restore
40 habitat, or reduce stressors that exacerbate climate impacts;

1 (iv) Prioritize actions that promote and protect human health;
2 (v) Consider flexible and adaptive approaches for preparing for
3 uncertain climate impacts, where relevant.

4 (3) By July 1, 2024, the department of ecology, in coordination
5 with partner agencies, shall provide recommendations to the
6 governor's office and relevant committees of the legislature,
7 consistent with RCW 70A.65.050, on a durable structure for
8 coordinating and implementing the state's climate resilience
9 strategy, including a process for prioritizing and coordinating
10 funding for climate resilience actions across agencies.

11 (4) The department of ecology shall update the climate response
12 strategy every four years and provide interim biennial work plans to
13 the governor's office that report on implementation progress and
14 summarize agency needs and priorities for biennial budget planning
15 processes starting by September 30, 2025.

16 (5) Agencies responsible for implementing actions in the updated
17 strategy shall provide information needed for reporting to the
18 department of ecology by August 15th of odd-numbered years starting
19 in 2025. Agencies may identify and include any resources needed to
20 carry out duties under RCW 70A.05.040.

21 **Sec. 4.** RCW 70A.05.030 and 2009 c 519 s 12 are each amended to
22 read as follows:

23 The department(~~(s)~~) of ecology(~~(, agriculture, community, trade,~~
24 ~~and economic development, fish and wildlife, natural resources, and~~
25 ~~transportation)~~) and partner agencies may consult with qualified
26 nonpartisan experts from the scientific community including, but not
27 limited to, the University of Washington's climate impacts group, as
28 needed to assist with (~~(developing an)~~) updating the integrated
29 climate change response strategy. The qualified nonpartisan experts
30 from the scientific community may assist the department of ecology on
31 the following components:

32 (1) ~~Identifying ((the timing and extent of impacts from climate~~
33 ~~change;~~

34 ~~(2) Assessing the effects of climate variability and change in~~
35 ~~the context of multiple interacting stressors or impacts;~~

36 ~~(3) Developing forecasting models;~~

37 ~~(4) Determining the resilience of the environment, natural~~
38 ~~systems, communities, and organizations to deal with potential or~~
39 ~~actual impacts of climate change and the vulnerability to which a~~

1 ~~natural or social system is susceptible to sustaining damage from~~
2 ~~climate change impacts; and~~

3 ~~(5))~~ best practices and processes for prioritizing resilience
4 actions and assessing the effectiveness of potential actions;

5 (2) Developing a process for identifying metrics and measuring
6 progress and success towards statewide resilience goals;

7 (3) Analyzing opportunities and gaps in current agency resilience
8 efforts; and

9 (4) Identifying other issues, as determined by the department of
10 ecology, necessary to develop policies and actions for the integrated
11 climate change response strategy.

12 **Sec. 5.** RCW 70A.05.040 and 2009 c 519 s 13 are each amended to
13 read as follows:

14 State agencies shall ~~((strive to incorporate adaptation plans of~~
15 ~~action))~~ consider current and future climate change impacts to the
16 full extent allowed under existing authority and incorporate climate
17 resilience and adaptation actions as priority activities when
18 planning ~~((~~or~~))~~, designing, revising, or implementing relevant agency
19 policies and programs. Agencies shall consider: The integrated
20 climate change response strategy when designing, planning, and
21 funding infrastructure projects; and incorporating natural resource
22 adaptation actions and alternative energy sources when designing and
23 planning infrastructure projects.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 70A.05
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 (1) The department of ecology shall work with the office of
27 financial management and other relevant state agencies and entities
28 to facilitate coordination of a state response to federal funding
29 opportunities related to climate resilience.

30 (2) In seeking to better coordinate funding for climate
31 resilience, the department of ecology may develop an interagency work
32 group structure and may leverage any existing forums such as the
33 interagency, multijurisdictional system improvement team established
34 in RCW 43.155.150.

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