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**SENATE BILL 5876**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senator Fortunato

Prefiled 12/19/23.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a streamlined grant application  
2 process for ecosystem investments; and adding a new section to  
3 chapter 79A.25 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 79A.25  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
8 specific purpose, covered agencies must coordinate to establish a  
9 streamlined application process for state voluntary funding programs  
10 addressing ecosystem investments in order to:

11 (a) Increase leveraging of local, state, and federal funding;  
12 (b) Increase pace and scale of project completion;  
13 (c) Expand capacity of local project proponents;  
14 (d) Improve return on investment for member agencies;  
15 (e) Achieve more equitable and climate resilient project  
16 investments; and

17 (f) Otherwise identify and implement administrative improvements  
18 for state voluntary funding programs addressing:

19 (i) Projects and activities consistent with the action agenda as  
20 defined in RCW 90.71.010;

21 (ii) Salmon protection, recovery, and restoration;

1 (iii) Watershed recovery;  
2 (iv) Ecosystem recovery; and  
3 (v) Water quality protection and restoration.  
4 (2) Objectives of the streamlined application process must  
5 include:  
6 (a) Improving grant application processes for applicants;  
7 (b) Streamlining grant management processes for recipients;  
8 (c) Improving connectivity and accountability between project  
9 proponents and agencies;  
10 (d) Streamlining and improving the accuracy of reporting of  
11 accomplishments by recipients; and  
12 (e) Improving collaboration and information sharing among grant  
13 managers.  
14 (3) Covered agencies must achieve these objectives by:  
15 (a) Utilizing an active interagency forum for grant making  
16 practitioners to share updates, develop common resources, leverage  
17 successes, and consider innovative approaches;  
18 (b) Maintaining a sustained, regular dialogue and feedback loop  
19 with project proponents to identify administrative challenges,  
20 barriers, and gaps;  
21 (c) Engaging agency leaders with appropriate decision-making  
22 authorities in the prioritization and implementation of potential  
23 actions or deliverables that will improve funding systems; and  
24 (d) Securing and mobilizing resources needed to develop,  
25 maintain, and move forward a clear plan of work as agreed upon by  
26 covered agencies.  
27 (4) Covered agencies may achieve these objectives by:  
28 (a) Resourcing and focusing on improving administrative processes  
29 for voluntary funding programs within the existing authority of the  
30 agencies;  
31 (b) Exploring and developing policy recommendations for improving  
32 administrative processes of such programs for consideration by the  
33 legislature;  
34 (c) Developing joint application forms; or  
35 (d) Establishing working groups, including inviting technical  
36 experts and stakeholders outside of covered agencies to support  
37 discussions, provide additional technical capacity, and improve  
38 coordination.  
39 (5) (a) Covered agencies must develop and approve a biennial work  
40 plan that includes:

1 (i) Selection of priority projects and deliverables to be  
2 achieved;

3 (ii) Identification of representatives of member agencies to  
4 serve as an operations working group to support coordination and  
5 communication between working groups and agency leaders; and

6 (iii) Establishment of any additional working groups and  
7 associated agency staff to help support priority projects and  
8 deliverables.

9 (b) Substantive changes to the work plan may be made at any time  
10 as agreed upon by covered agencies.

11 (6) Beginning September 1, 2025, covered agencies must provide an  
12 annual report to the appropriate committees of the legislature on the  
13 actions of covered agencies and administrative improvements to state  
14 voluntary funding programs.

15 (7) For the purposes of this section, "covered agencies" include  
16 the Puget Sound partnership, the department of ecology, the  
17 recreation and conservation office, the department of fish and  
18 wildlife, and the state conservation commission.

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