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**SENATE BILL 5550**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators MacEwen and J. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to funding the state transportation system using climate commitment act revenues; amending RCW 70A.65.100, 70A.65.240, and 70A.65.250; adding a new section to chapter 70A.65 RCW; creating a new section; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  It is the intent of the legislature to ensure Washington's transportation infrastructure can support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. The legislature finds that people were told that a repeal of the climate commitment act would devastate transportation and infrastructure programs, putting major road and bridge projects at risk of delay or even cancellation. Yet, the climate commitment act prohibits the use of auction revenues for funding major road and bridge projects. The legislature recognizes that public transit and zero emissions vehicles travel on roads. Congestion on the highway system increases greenhouse gas emissions, instead of reducing them. Therefore, the legislature finds to respect the will of the voters and honor statements made to the people, climate commitment act revenues are appropriately used for road and bridge projects.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 70A.65 RCW to read as follows:

Revenues derived under this act must be used on major highway projects and bridge replacements including, but not limited to, funding to replace the Interstate 5 bridge over the Columbia river; finish the US 395 North Spokane corridor; finish the state route number 520 bridge; and the Gateway freight project connecting state route number 509 and state route number 167 to the ports in Pierce county and King county to help move freight and reduce congestion.

**Sec.**  RCW 70A.65.100 and 2024 c 352 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as provided in RCW 70A.65.110, 70A.65.120, and 70A.65.130, the department shall distribute allowances through auctions as provided in this section and in rules adopted by the department to implement these sections. An allowance is not a property right.

(2)(a) The department shall hold a maximum of four auctions annually, plus any necessary reserve auctions. An auction may include allowances from the annual allowance budget of the current year and allowances from the annual allowance budgets from prior years that remain to be distributed. The department must transmit to the environmental justice council an auction notice at least 60 days prior to each auction, as well as a summary results report and a postauction public proceeds report within 60 days after each auction. The department must communicate the results of the previous calendar year's auctions to the environmental justice council on an annual basis beginning in 2024.

(b) The department must make future vintage allowances available through parallel auctions at least twice annually in addition to the auctions through which current vintage allowances are exclusively offered under (a) of this subsection.

(3) The department shall engage a qualified, independent contractor to run the auctions. The department shall also engage a qualified financial services administrator to hold the bid guarantees, evaluate bid guarantees, and inform the department of the value of bid guarantees once the bids are accepted.

(4) Auctions are open to covered entities, opt-in entities, and general market participants that are registered entities in good standing. The department shall adopt by rule the requirements for a registered entity to register and participate in a given auction.

(a) Registered entities intending to participate in an auction must submit an application to participate at least 30 days prior to the auction. The application must include the documentation required for review and approval by the department. A registered entity is eligible to participate only after receiving a notice of approval by the department.

(b) Each registered entity that elects to participate in the auction must have a different representative. Only a representative with an approved auction account is authorized to access the auction platform to submit an application or confirm the intent to bid for the registered entity, submit bids on behalf of the registered entity during the bidding window, or to download reports specific to the auction.

(5) The department may require a bid guarantee, payable to the financial services administrator, in an amount greater than or equal to the sum of the maximum value of the bids to be submitted by the registered entity.

(6) To protect the integrity of the auctions, a registered entity or group of registered entities with a direct corporate association are subject to auction purchase and holding limits. The department may impose additional limits if it deems necessary to protect the integrity and functioning of the auctions:

(a) A covered entity or an opt-in entity may not buy more than 25 percent of the allowances offered during a single auction;

(b) A general market participant may not buy more than four percent of the allowances offered during a single auction;

(c) Until Washington links with a jurisdiction that does not have this requirement, a general market participant may not in aggregate own more than 10 percent of total allowances to be issued in a calendar year;

(d) No registered entity may buy more than the entity's bid guarantee; and

(e) No registered entity may buy allowances that would exceed the entity's holding limit at the time of the auction.

(7)(a) For fiscal year 2023, upon completion and verification of the auction results, the financial services administrator shall notify winning bidders and transfer the auction proceeds to the state treasurer for deposit as follows: (i) $127,341,000 must first be deposited into the carbon emissions reduction account created in RCW 70A.65.240; and (ii) the remaining auction proceeds to the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250 and the air quality and health disparities improvement account created in RCW 70A.65.280.

(b) For fiscal year 2024, upon completion and verification of the auction results, the financial services administrator shall notify winning bidders and transfer the auction proceeds to the state treasurer for deposit as follows: (i) $356,697,000 must first be deposited into the carbon emissions reduction account created in RCW 70A.65.240, except during fiscal year 2024, the deposit as provided in this subsection (7)(b)(i) may be prorated equally across each of the auctions occurring in fiscal year 2024; and (ii) the remaining auction proceeds to the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250 and the air quality and health disparities improvement account created in RCW 70A.65.280, which may be prorated equally across each of the auctions occurring in fiscal year 2024.

(c) For fiscal year 2025, upon completion and verification of the auction results, the financial services administrator shall notify winning bidders and transfer the auction proceeds to the state treasurer for deposit as follows:

(i) $366,558,000 must first be deposited into the carbon emissions reduction account created in RCW 70A.65.240, except that during fiscal year 2025, the deposit as provided in this subsection (7)(c)(i) may be prorated equally across each of the auctions occurring in fiscal year 2025; ((~~and~~))

(ii) ((~~the~~)) The remaining auction proceeds to the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250 and the air quality and health disparities improvement account created in RCW 70A.65.280, which may be prorated equally across each of the auctions occurring in fiscal year 2025; and

(iii) The legislature intends to transfer funding in fiscal year 2025 from one or more climate commitment act accounts to the multimodal transportation account created in RCW 47.66.070.

(d) For fiscal years 2026 through 2037, upon completion and verification of the auction results, the financial services administrator shall notify winning bidders and transfer the auction proceeds to the state treasurer for deposit as follows: (i) $359,117,000 per year must first be deposited into the carbon emissions reduction account created in RCW 70A.65.240; and (ii) the remaining auction proceeds to the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250 and the air quality and health disparities improvement account created in RCW 70A.65.280.

(e) ((~~The deposits into the carbon emissions reduction account pursuant to (a) through (d) of this subsection must not exceed $5,200,000,000 over the first 16 fiscal years and any remaining auction proceeds must be deposited into the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250 and the air quality and health disparities improvement account created in RCW 70A.65.280.~~)) In each fiscal year during fiscal years 2026 through 2037, the office of financial management must determine the total amount of auction proceeds that are obligated by legislative appropriation or the deposits into the carbon emissions reduction account under this section, and prorate this obligated amount among the auctions in each fiscal year as appropriate. Following each auction, the office of financial management must determine the amount of additional auction proceeds that exceed the obligated amount in this subsection, if any, and direct the state treasurer to transfer 50 percent of these additional auction proceeds from one or more climate commitment act accounts with available funds into the multimodal transportation account created in RCW 47.66.070.

(f) For fiscal year 2038 and each year thereafter, upon completion and verification of the auction results, the financial services administrator shall notify winning bidders and transfer the auction proceeds to the state treasurer for deposit as follows: (i) 50 percent of the auction proceeds to the carbon emissions reduction account created in RCW 70A.65.240; and (ii) the remaining auction proceeds to the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250 and the air quality and health disparities improvement account created in RCW 70A.65.280.

(8) The department shall adopt by rule provisions to guard against bidder collusion and minimize the potential for market manipulation. A registered entity may not release or disclose any bidding information including: Intent to participate or refrain from participation; auction approval status; intent to bid; bidding strategy; bid price or bid quantity; or information on the bid guarantee provided to the financial services administrator. The department may cancel or restrict a previously approved auction participation application or reject a new application if the department determines that a registered entity has:

(a) Provided false or misleading facts;

(b) Withheld material information that could influence a decision by the department;

(c) Violated any part of the auction rules;

(d) Violated registration requirements; or

(e) Violated any of the rules regarding the conduct of the auction.

(9) Records containing the following information are confidential and are exempt from public disclosure in their entirety:

(a) Bidding information as identified in subsection (8) of this section;

(b) Information contained in the secure, online electronic tracking system established by the department pursuant to RCW 70A.65.090(6);

(c) Financial, proprietary, and other market sensitive information as determined by the department that is submitted to the department pursuant to this chapter;

(d) Financial, proprietary, and other market sensitive information as determined by the department that is submitted to the independent contractor or the financial services administrator engaged by the department pursuant to subsection (3) of this section; and

(e) Financial, proprietary, and other market sensitive information as determined by the department that is submitted to a jurisdiction with which the department has entered into a linkage agreement pursuant to RCW 70A.65.210, and which is shared with the department, the independent contractor, or the financial services administrator pursuant to a linkage agreement.

(10) Any cancellation or restriction approved by the department under subsection (8) of this section may be permanent or for a specified number of auctions and the cancellation or restriction imposed is not exclusive and is in addition to the remedies that may be available pursuant to chapter 19.86 RCW or other state or federal laws, if applicable.

(11) The department shall design allowance auctions so as to allow, to the maximum extent practicable, linking with external greenhouse gas emissions trading programs in other jurisdictions and to facilitate the transfer of allowances when the state's program has entered into a linkage agreement with other external greenhouse gas emissions trading programs. The department may conduct auctions jointly with linked jurisdictions.

(12) In setting the number of allowances offered at each auction, the department shall consider the allowances in the marketplace due to the marketing of allowances issued as required under RCW 70A.65.110, 70A.65.120, and 70A.65.130 in the department's determination of the number of allowances to be offered at auction. The department shall offer only such number of allowances at each auction as will enhance the likelihood of achieving the goals of RCW 70A.45.020.

**Sec.**  RCW 70A.65.240 and 2022 c 182 s 101 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The carbon emissions reduction account is created in the state treasury. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the account are intended to affect reductions in transportation sector carbon emissions through a variety of carbon reducing investments. These can include, but are not limited to: Transportation alternatives to single occupancy passenger vehicles; reductions in single occupancy passenger vehicle miles traveled; reductions in per mile emissions in vehicles, including through the funding of alternative fuel infrastructure and incentive programs; projects that reduce congestion on roadways; and emission reduction programs for freight transportation, including motor vehicles and rail, as well as for ferries and other maritime and port activities. Expenditures from the account ((~~may only be made for transportation carbon emission reducing purposes and may not be made for highway purposes authorized under the 18th Amendment of the Washington state Constitution, other than specified in this section, and~~)) shall be made in accordance with subsection (2) of this section. It is the legislature's intent that expenditures from the account used to reduce carbon emissions be made with the goal of achieving equity for communities that historically have been omitted or adversely impacted by past transportation policies and practices.

(2) Appropriations in an omnibus transportation appropriations act from the carbon emissions reduction account shall be made exclusively to fund the following activities:

(a) Maintenance, repairs, improvements, and replacement of highways and transportation routes, favoring bridges used by active transportation and transit users;

(b) Active transportation;

((~~(b)~~)) (c) Transit programs and projects;

((~~(c)~~)) (d) Alternative fuel and electrification;

((~~(d)~~)) (e) Ferries; and

((~~(e)~~)) (f) Rail.

**Sec.**  RCW 70A.65.250 and 2024 c 376 s 911 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) The climate investment account is created in the state treasury. Except as otherwise provided in RCW 70.65.100 and 70.65.240 and chapter 316, Laws of 2021, ((~~all~~)) receipts from the auction of allowances authorized in this chapter must be deposited into the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation.

(b) Projects or activities funded from the account must meet high labor standards, including family sustaining wages, providing benefits including health care and employer-contributed retirement plans, career development opportunities, and maximize access to economic benefits from such projects for local workers and diverse businesses. Each contracting entity's proposal must be reviewed for equity and opportunity improvement efforts, including: (i) Employer paid sick leave programs; (ii) pay practices in relation to living wage indicators such as the federal poverty level; (iii) efforts to evaluate pay equity based on gender identity, race, and other protected status under Washington law; (iv) facilitating career development opportunities, such as apprenticeship programs, internships, job-shadowing, and on-the-job training; and (v) employment assistance and employment barriers for justice affected individuals.

(2) Moneys in the account may be used only for projects and programs that achieve the purposes of the greenhouse gas emissions cap and invest program established under this chapter and for tribal capacity grants under RCW 70A.65.305. During the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, moneys in the account may also be used for tribal capacity grant activities supporting climate resilience and adaptation, developing tribal clean energy projects, applying for state or federal grant funding, and other related work; and for providing payments to agricultural fuel purchasers. Moneys in the account as described in this subsection must first be appropriated for the administration of the requirements of this chapter, in an amount not to exceed five percent of the total receipt of funds from allowance auction proceeds under this chapter. Beginning July 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, the state treasurer shall distribute funds in the account that exceed the amounts appropriated for the purposes of this subsection (2) as follows:

(a) Seventy-five percent of the moneys to the climate commitment account created in RCW 70A.65.260; and

(b) Twenty-five percent of the moneys to the natural climate solutions account created in RCW 70A.65.270.

(3) The allocations specified in subsection (2)(a) and (b) of this section must be reviewed by the legislature on a biennial basis based on the changing needs of the state in meeting its clean economy and greenhouse gas reduction goals in a timely, economically advantageous, and equitable manner.

(4) During the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, the legislature may direct the state treasurer to make transfers of moneys in the climate investment account to the carbon emissions reduction account, the climate commitment account, and the natural climate solutions account.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2025.

**--- END ---**