

WAC 173-446-020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise. For those terms not listed in this section, the definitions found in chapters 173-441 and 173-446A WAC apply in this chapter.

"Additional" means, in the context of the offset provisions of this rule, greenhouse gas emission reductions or removals that exceed any greenhouse gas reduction or removals otherwise required by law, regulation or legally binding mandate, and that exceed any greenhouse gas reductions or removals that would otherwise occur in a business-as-usual scenario.

"Adverse offset verification statement" means an offset verification statement rendered by a verification body attesting that the verification body cannot say with reasonable assurance that the submitted offset project data report is free of an offset material misstatement, or that it cannot attest that the offset project data report conforms to the requirements of this chapter or applicable compliance offset protocol.

"Affiliated registered entities" means registered entities in a direct or indirect corporate association.

"Aggregation" means, in the context of offsets, a grouping of offset projects carried out according to the same compliance offset protocol and under the responsibility of the same offset project developer or operator.

"Allowance" means an authorization to emit up to one metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent.

"Allowance price containment reserve" means an account maintained by ecology with allowances available for sale through separate reserve auctions at predefined prices to assist in containing compliance costs for covered and opt-in entities in the event of unanticipated high costs for compliance instruments.

"Annual allowance budget" means the total number of GHG allowances allocated for auction and distribution for one calendar year by ecology.

"Asset controlling supplier" or "ACS" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Auction" means the process of selling GHG allowances by offering them up for bid, taking bids, and then distributing the allowances to winning bidders.

"Auction floor price" means a price for allowances below which bids at auction are not eligible to be accepted.

"Auction purchase limit" means the limit on the number of allowances one registered entity or a group of affiliated registered entities may purchase from the share of allowances sold at an auction.

"Auction settlement price" means the price announced by ecology at the conclusion of each auction that all successful bidders pay for each allowance.

"Authorized project designee" means an entity authorized by an offset project operator to act on behalf of the offset project operator. The authorized project designee must be a primary account representative or alternate account representative on the offset project operator's holding account.

"Balancing authority" means the responsible party that integrates resource plans ahead of time, maintains load-interchange generation balance within a balancing authority area, and supports interconnection frequency in real time.

"Balancing authority area" means the collection of generation, transmission, and load within the metered boundaries of a balancing

authority. A balancing authority maintains load-resource balance within this area.

"Banking" means the holding of compliance instruments from one compliance period for the purpose of sale or use for compliance in a future compliance period.

"Best available technology" or "BAT" means a technology or technologies that will achieve the greatest reduction in GHG emissions, taking into account the fuels, processes, and equipment used by facilities to produce goods of comparable type, quantity, and quality. Best available technology must be technically feasible, commercially available, economically viable, not create excessive environmental impacts, and be compliant with all applicable laws while not changing the characteristics of the good being manufactured.

"Biomass" means nonfossilized and biodegradable organic material originating from plants, animals, and microorganisms, including products, by-products, residues, and waste from agriculture, forestry, and related industries as well as the nonfossilized and biodegradable organic fractions of municipal wastewater and industrial waste, including gases and liquids recovered from the decomposition of nonfossilized and biodegradable organic material.

"Biomass-derived fuels," "biomass fuels," or "biofuels" means fuels derived from biomass that have at least 40 percent lower GHG emissions based on a full life-cycle analysis when compared to petroleum fuels for which biofuels are capable as serving as a substitute.

"Bundled transaction" means the retail sale of two or more products, except real property or services to real property, where:

- (a) The products are otherwise distinct and identifiable; and
- (b) The products are sold for one nonitemized price.

A bundled transaction does not include the sale of any products in which the sale price varies or is negotiable, based on the selection by the purchaser of the products included in the transaction.

"Business-as-usual scenario" means, in the context of offsets, the set of conditions reasonably expected to occur within the offset project boundary in the absence of the financial incentives provided by offset credits, taking into account all current laws and regulations, as well as current economic and technological trends.

"Cap and invest consultant or advisor" means an individual or party that meets the criteria in WAC 173-446-056.

"Carbon dioxide equivalents" or "CO₂e" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Carbon dioxide removal" or "greenhouse gas removal" means deliberate human activities removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and durably storing it in geological, terrestrial, or ocean reservoirs, or in products. "Carbon dioxide removal" includes existing and potential anthropogenic enhancement of biological or geochemical sinks and including, but not limited to, carbon mineralization and direct air capture and storage.

"Centralized electricity market" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Closed electricity importer" means an electricity importer that has elected to permanently stop providing or importing electric power into Washington.

"Closed facility" means a facility at which the current owner or operator has elected to permanently stop production and will no longer be an emissions source.

"Closed supplier" means a supplier that has elected to permanently stop supplying any of the materials that trigger coverage as a supplier under chapter 70A.65 RCW and this chapter.

"Compliance instrument" means an allowance or offset credit issued by ecology or by an external GHG emissions trading program to which Washington has linked its cap and invest program. One compliance instrument is equal to one metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent.

"Compliance obligation" means the requirement to submit to ecology the number of compliance instruments equivalent to a covered or opt-in entity's covered emissions during the compliance period.

"Compliance offset protocol" means an offset protocol adopted by ecology.

"Compliance period" means the four-year period for which the compliance obligation is calculated for covered entities.

"Conservative" means, in the context of offsets, utilizing project baseline assumptions, emission factors, and methodologies that are more likely than not to understate net GHG reductions or GHG removal enhancements for an offset project to address uncertainties affecting the calculation or measurement of GHG reductions or GHG removal enhancements.

"Cost burden" means the impact on rates or charges to customers of electric utilities in Washington for the incremental cost of electricity service to serve load due to the compliance cost for GHG emissions caused by the program. Cost burden includes administrative costs from the utility's participation in the program.

"Covered emissions" means the emissions described in WAC 173-446-040 for which a covered entity has a compliance obligation under this chapter.

"Covered entity" means a person that is designated by ecology as subject to this chapter as specified in WAC 173-446-030 or 173-446-060. Each facility, supplier, or first jurisdictional deliverer serving as an electricity importer is a separate covered entity.

"Crediting baseline" refers to the reduction of absolute GHG emissions below the business-as-usual scenario after the imposition of greenhouse gas emission reduction requirements or incentives.

"Crediting period" means the predetermined period of time for which an offset project will remain eligible to be issued ecology offset credits or registry offset credits for verified GHG emission reductions or GHG removal enhancements.

"Curtailed electric power entity" means an electric power entity at which the owner or operator has temporarily suspended operations but for which the owner or operator maintains any necessary permits and retains the option to resume business if conditions become amenable.

"Curtailed facility" means a facility at which the owner or operator has temporarily suspended production but for which the owner or operator maintains operating permits and retains the option to resume production if conditions become amenable.

"Curtailed supplier" means a supplier at which the owner or operator has temporarily suspended operations but for which the owner or operator maintains any necessary permits and retains the option to resume business if conditions become amenable.

"Deemed market importer" has the same meaning as in WAC 173-441-124.

"Direct corporate association" means a group of parties that meet the requirements in WAC 173-446-105 to be a direct corporate association.

"Direct environmental benefits in the state" means, in the context of offsets, environmental benefits accomplished through the reduction or avoidance of emissions of any air pollutant in the state or the reduction or avoidance of the release of any pollutant that could have an adverse impact on land or waters of the state.

"Direct GHG emission reduction" means a reduction of GHG emissions from applicable GHG emission sources, GHG sinks, or GHG reservoirs that are under control of an offset project operator or authorized project designee.

"Direct GHG removal enhancement" means a GHG removal enhancement from applicable GHG emission sources, GHG sinks, or GHG reservoirs under control of the offset project operator or authorized project designee.

"Ecology" means the Washington state department of ecology or its agents, including the auction administrator and the financial services administrator retained by ecology pursuant to RCW 70A.65.100(3).

"Electric power entity" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Electricity importer" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Emissions containment reserve allowance" means a conditional allowance that is withheld from sale at an auction by ecology or its agent to secure additional emissions reductions in the event prices fall below the emissions containment reserve trigger price, or any other allowance placed into the emissions containment reserve.

"Emissions containment reserve trigger price" means the price below which allowances will be withheld from sale at an auction by ecology, as determined by ecology by rule unless ecology has suspended the emissions containment reserve trigger price.

"Emissions threshold" means the GHG emission level at or above which a person has a compliance obligation under this chapter.

"Emissions year" means the calendar year in which GHG emissions occur.

"Environmental benefits" means activities that:

(a) Prevent or reduce existing environmental harms or associated risks that contribute significantly to cumulative environmental health impacts;

(b) Prevent or mitigate impacts to overburdened communities or vulnerable populations from, or support community response to, the impacts of environmental harm; or

(c) Meet a community need formally identified to a covered agency by an overburdened community or vulnerable population that is consistent with the intent of chapter 70A.02 RCW.

"Environmental harm" means the individual or cumulative environmental health impacts and risks to communities caused by historic, current, or projected:

(a) Exposure to pollution, conventional or toxic pollutants, environmental hazards, or other contamination in the air, water, and land;

(b) Adverse environmental effects, including exposure to contamination, hazardous substances, or pollution that increase the risk of adverse environmental health outcomes or create vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change;

(c) Loss or impairment of ecosystem functions or traditional food resources or loss of access to gather cultural resources or harvest traditional foods; or

(d) Health and economic impacts from climate change.

"Environmental impacts" means environmental benefits or environmental harms, or the combination of environmental benefits and harms, resulting or expected to result from a proposed action.

"Environmental justice council" means the council established in RCW 70A.02.110.

"External GHG emissions trading program" or "external GHG ETS" means a government program, other than Washington's program created in this chapter, that restricts GHG emissions from sources outside of Washington and that allows emissions trading.

"Facility" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Federal power marketing administration" means any of the four federal power marketing administrations that operate electric systems and sell the electrical output of federally owned and operated hydro-electric dams in the United States.

"First jurisdictional deliverer" means the owner or operator of an electric generating facility in Washington state or an electricity importer.

"Forest buffer account" means a holding account for ecology offset credits issued to forest offset projects. It is used as a general insurance mechanism against unintentional reversals, for all forest offset projects listed under a compliance offset protocol.

"Forest owner" means the owner of any interest in the real property on which a forest offset project is located, excluding government agency or other third-party beneficiaries of conservation easements. Generally, a forest owner is the owner in fee of the real property on which a forest offset project is located. In some cases, one party may be the owner in fee while another party may have an interest in the trees or the timber on the property, in which case all parties with interest in the real property are collectively considered the forest owners; however, a single forest owner must be identified as the offset project operator.

"General market participant" means a registered entity that is not identified as a covered entity or an opt-in entity that is registered in the program registry and intends to purchase, hold, sell, or voluntarily retire compliance instruments.

"Greenhouse gas" or "GHG" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Greenhouse gas emission reduction" or "GHG emission reduction" or "greenhouse gas reduction" or "GHG reduction" means a calculated decrease in GHG emissions relative to a project baseline over a specified period of time.

"Greenhouse gas emissions source" or "GHG emissions source" means, in the context of offsets, any type of emitting activity that releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

"Greenhouse gas removal enhancement" or "GHG removal enhancement" means a calculated increase in GHG removals relative to a project baseline.

"Greenhouse gas reservoir" or "GHG reservoir" means a physical unit or component of the biosphere, geosphere, or hydrosphere with the capability to store, accumulate, or release a GHG removed from the atmosphere by a GHG sink or a GHG captured from a GHG emission source.

"Greenhouse gas sink" or "GHG sink" means a physical unit or process that removes a GHG from the atmosphere.

"Holding limit" means the maximum number of allowances that may be held for use or trade by a registered entity at any one time.

"Imported electricity" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Indirect corporate association" means a group of parties that meet the requirements in WAC 173-446-105 to be an indirect corporate association.

"Initial crediting period" means the crediting period that begins with the first day of the first reporting period which receives a positive offset or qualified positive offset verification statement and has that offset verification statement approved by ecology.

"Intentional reversal" means any reversal, except as provided below, which is caused by a forest owner's negligence, gross negligence, or willful intent, including harvesting, development, and harm to the area within the offset project boundary, or caused by approved growth models overestimating carbon stocks. A reversal caused by an intentional back burn set by, or at the request of, a local, state, or federal fire protection agency for the purpose of protecting forestlands from an advancing wildfire that began on another property through no negligence, gross negligence, or willful misconduct of the forest owner is not considered an intentional reversal but, rather, an unintentional reversal. Receiving adverse offset verification statements on two consecutive offset verifications after the end of the final crediting period will be considered an intentional reversal.

"Lead offset verifier" means a party that has met all the requirements in WAC 173-441-085(7) and who may act as the lead verifier of an offset verification team providing offset verification services or as a lead verifier providing an independent review of offset verification services rendered.

"Lead offset verifier independent reviewer" or "independent offset reviewer" means a lead offset verifier within a verification body who has not participated in conducting offset verification services for an offset project developer or authorized project designee for the current offset project data report and who provides an independent review of offset verification services rendered for an offset project developer or authorized project designee as required in WAC 173-446-530. The independent reviewer is not required to also meet the requirements for a sector specific or offset project specific verifier.

"Leakage" means a reduction in emissions of GHGs within the state that is offset by a directly attributable increase in GHG emissions outside the state and outside the geography of another jurisdiction with a linkage agreement with Washington.

"Limits" means the GHG emissions reductions required by RCW 70A.45.020.

"Linkage" means a bilateral or multilateral decision under a linkage agreement between GHG market programs to accept compliance instruments issued by a participating jurisdiction to meet the obligations of regulated entities in a partner jurisdiction and to otherwise coordinate activities to facilitate operation of a joint market.

"Linkage agreement" means a nonbinding agreement that connects two or more GHG market programs and articulates a mutual understanding of how the participating jurisdictions will work together to facilitate a connected GHG market.

"Linked jurisdiction" means a jurisdiction with which Washington has entered into a linkage agreement.

"Market position" means the combination of the current and/or expected holdings of compliance instruments by a registered entity and the current and/or expected covered emissions of that registered entity.

"Market sensitive information" means information related to registered entities, or their participation in the cap and invest program that is not otherwise publicly available, and for which ecology determines that the public interest in disclosure is outweighed by the public interest served by maintaining the confidentiality of such information, on the basis that its disclosure would be reasonably expected to have an effect on the price or value of allowances or offset credits and/or enable a registered entity to engage in market manipulation such as bidder collusion, market cornering, or extortion of other market participant. "Market sensitive information" does not include data reported under chapter 173-441 WAC, except to the extent that the disclosure of such data for a particular emission year at any time prior to November 15th of the following calendar year would enable a registered entity to engage in market manipulation. "Market sensitive information" also does not include anonymized information about the contents of registered entities' holding accounts that is publicly displayed pursuant to RCW 70A.65.090 (7)(b), except to the extent that the disclosure of such information that is less than 45 days old would enable a registered entity to engage in market manipulation.

"Multijurisdictional consumer-owned utility" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Multijurisdictional electric company" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"NERC e-tag" or "e-tag" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Offset credit" means a tradable compliance instrument that represents an emissions reduction or emissions removal of one metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent.

"Offset material misstatement" means a discrepancy, omission, misreporting, or aggregation of the three, identified in the course of offset verification services that leads an offset verification team to conclude that an offset project data report contains errors resulting in an overstatement of the reported total GHG emission reductions or GHG removal enhancements by greater than five percent. Discrepancies, omissions, or misreporting, or an aggregation of the three, that result in an understatement of total reported GHG emission reductions or GHG removal enhancements in the offset project data report is not an offset material misstatement.

"Offset project" means a project that reduces or removes GHG that are not covered emissions under this chapter.

"Offset project boundary" is defined by and includes all GHG emission sources, GHG sinks, and GHG reservoirs that are affected by an offset project and under control of the offset project operator or authorized project designee. GHG emissions sources, GHG sinks or GHG reservoirs not under control of the offset project operator or authorized project designee are not included in the offset project boundary.

"Offset project data report" means the report prepared by an offset project operator or authorized project designee each reporting period that provides the information, documentation, and attestations required by this chapter or a compliance offset protocol. An unattested report is not a valid offset project data report, and therefore cannot be used to satisfy any deadlines regarding submittal of an offset project data report.

"Offset project listing" or "listing" means the information, documentation, and attestations required by this chapter or a compliance offset protocol that an offset project operator or authorized project designee has submitted to ecology or an offset project registry, and

that has been reviewed for completeness by ecology and/or the offset project registry and publicly listed by ecology or the offset project registry for an initial or renewed crediting period. An offset project listing must include the attestations required by this chapter in order to be considered complete by ecology or the offset project registry.

"Offset project operator" means the party(ies) with legal authority to implement the offset project. Only a primary account representative or alternate account representative may sign listing documents, an offset project data report, a request for issuance, or attestations on behalf of the offset project operator.

"Offset project registry" means a party that meets the requirements of this chapter and is approved by ecology that lists offset projects, collects offset project data reports, facilitates verification of offset project data reports, and issues registry offset credits for offset projects being implemented using a compliance offset protocol.

"Offset protocols" means a set of procedures and standards to quantify GHG reductions or GHG removals achieved by an offset project.

"Offset verification" means a systematic, independent, and documented process for evaluation of an offset project operator's or authorized project designee's offset project data report against ecology compliance offset protocols and this chapter for calculating and reporting project baseline emissions, project emissions, GHG reductions, and GHG removal enhancements.

"Offset verification body" means a firm accredited or recognized by ecology, which is able to render an offset verification statement and provide offset verification services for offset project operators or authorized project designees subject to providing an offset project data report under this chapter.

"Offset verification services" means services provided during offset verification, including reviewing an offset project operator's or authorized project designee's offset project data report, verifying its accuracy according to the standards specified in WAC 173-446-535 and the applicable compliance offset protocol, assessing the offset project operator's or authorized project designee's compliance with this chapter and applicable compliance offset protocol, and submitting an offset verification statement to ecology or an offset project registry.

"Offset verification statement" means the final statement rendered by a verification body attesting whether an offset project operator's or authorized project designee's offset project data report is free of an offset material misstatement, and whether the offset project data report conforms to the requirements of this chapter and applicable compliance offset protocol, and containing the attestations required pursuant to this chapter.

"Offset verification team" means all parties working for a verification body, including all subcontractors, to provide offset verification services for an offset project operator or authorized project designee.

"Opt-in entity" means a party responsible for greenhouse gas emissions that is not a covered entity but voluntarily participates in the program as authorized under RCW 70A.65.090(3).

"Overburdened community" means a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts or risks due to exposure to environmental pollutants or contami-

nants through multiple pathways, which may result in significant disparate adverse health outcomes or effects.

"Overburdened community" includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Highly impacted communities as defined in RCW 19.405.020;

(b) Communities located in census tracts that are fully or partially on "Indian country" as defined in 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1151; and

(c) Populations, including Native Americans or immigrant populations, who may be exposed to environmental contaminants and pollutants outside of the geographic area in which they reside based on the populations' use of traditional or cultural foods and practices, such as the use of resources, access to which is protected under treaty rights in ceded areas, when those exposures in conjunction with other exposures may result in disproportionately greater risks, including risks of certain cancers or other adverse health effects and outcomes.

(d) Overburdened communities identified by ecology shall include the same communities as those identified by ecology through its process for identifying overburdened communities under RCW 70A.02.010.

"Party" means an individual, person, firm, association, organization, partnership, business trust, corporation, limited liability company, company, or government agency.

"Permanent" means, in the context of offsets, either that GHG reductions and GHG removal enhancements are not reversible, or when GHG reductions and GHG removal enhancements may be reversible, that mechanisms are in place to replace any reversed GHG emission reductions and GHG removal enhancements to ensure that all credited reductions endure for at least the length of time specified in the associated offset protocol.

"Person" includes: An owner or operator of a facility; a supplier; or an electric power entity.

"Point of delivery" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Positive offset verification statement" means an offset verification statement rendered by a verification body attesting that the verification body can say with reasonable assurance that the submitted offset project data report is free of an offset material misstatement and that the offset project data report conforms to the requirements of this chapter and applicable compliance offset protocol.

"Price ceiling unit" means a unit issued at a fixed price by ecology for the purpose of limiting price increases and funding further investments in GHG reductions.

"Program" means the GHG emissions cap and invest program created by chapter 70A.65 RCW and implemented pursuant to this chapter.

"Program registry" means the data system in which covered entities, opt-in entities, and general market participants are registered and in which compliance instruments are recorded and tracked.

"Project baseline" means, in the context of a specific offset project, a conservative estimate of business-as-usual GHG emission reductions or GHG removal enhancements for the offset project's GHG emission sources, GHG sinks, or GHG reservoirs within the offset project boundary.

"Qualified positive offset verification statement" means an offset verification statement rendered by a verification body attesting that the verification body can say with reasonable assurance that the submitted offset project data report is free of an offset material misstatement, but the offset project data report may include one or more nonconformance(s) with this chapter and applicable compliance offset protocol which do not result in an offset material misstate-

ment. Nonconformance, in this context, does not include disregarding the explicit requirements of this chapter or applicable compliance offset protocol and substituting alternative requirements not approved by ecology.

"Registered entity" means a covered entity, opt-in entity, or general market participant that has completed the process for registration in the program registry.

"Registration applicant" means a covered entity, opt-in entity, or general market participant that is applying to register in the program registry.

"Registry offset credit" means a credit issued by an offset project registry for a GHG reduction or GHG removal enhancement of one metric ton of CO₂e.

"Reporter" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Reporting period" means, in the context of offsets, the period of time for which an offset project operator or authorized project designee quantifies and reports GHG reductions or GHG removal enhancements covered in an offset project data report. An offset project's reporting period is established in the project listing documentation, but may be modified pursuant to WAC 173-446-525(11).

"Retail electric load" has the same meaning as specified in RCW 19.405.020.

"Retire" means to permanently remove a compliance instrument such that the compliance instrument may never be sold, traded, used for compliance, or otherwise used again.

"Retirement account" means the account to which ecology transfers compliance instruments that have been surrendered for compliance.

"Sector" means an area of the economy in which a grouping of sources of greenhouse gas emissions share the same or related activity, product, or service.

"Sequestration" means the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storage of carbon in GHG sinks or GHG reservoirs through physical or biological processes.

"Specified source of electricity" or "specified source" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Supplier" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Tier 1 price" means the lower of the two prices set by ecology for allowances auctioned from the allowance price containment reserve.

"Tier 2 price" means the higher of the two prices set by ecology for allowances auctioned from the allowance price containment reserve.

"Total program baseline" means the total of covered greenhouse gas emissions from covered entities as established in WAC 173-446-200.

"Tribal lands" has the same meaning as defined in RCW 70A.02.010.

"Unintentional reversal" means any reversal, including wildfires or disease, that is not the result of the forest owner's negligence, gross negligence, or willful intent.

"Unspecified source of electricity" or "unspecified source" has the same meaning as in chapter 173-441 WAC.

"Vintage year" means the annual allowance allocation budget year to which an individual Washington GHG allowance is assigned.

"Voluntary renewable reserve account" or "voluntary renewable electricity reserve account" means a holding account maintained by ecology from which allowances may be retired for voluntary renewable electricity generation, which is directly delivered to the state and has not and will not be sold or used to meet any other mandatory re-

quirements in the state or any other jurisdiction, on behalf of voluntary renewable energy purchasers or end users.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 70A.65.080 (1)(c). WSR 24-24-087 (Order 23-01), s 173-446-020, filed 12/3/24, effective 1/3/25. Statutory Authority: RCW 70A.65.220. WSR 22-20-056 (Order 21-06), § 173-446-020, filed 9/29/22, effective 10/30/22.]