

**Chapter 70A.305 RCW**  
**HAZARDOUS WASTE CLEANUP—MODEL TOXICS CONTROL ACT**

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*Environmental certification programs—Fees—Rules—Liability: RCW 43.21A.175.*

**RCW 70A.305.010 Declaration of policy.** (1) Each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment, and each person has a responsibility to preserve and enhance that right. The beneficial stewardship of the land, air, and waters of the state is a solemn obligation of the present generation for the benefit of future generations.

(2) A healthful environment is now threatened by the irresponsible use and disposal of hazardous substances. There are hundreds of hazardous waste sites in this state, and more will be created if current waste practices continue. Hazardous waste sites threaten the state's water resources, including those used for public drinking water. Many of our municipal landfills are current or potential hazardous waste sites and present serious threats to human health and environment. The costs of eliminating these threats in many cases are beyond the financial means of our local governments and ratepayers. The main purpose of chapter 2, Laws of 1989 is to raise

sufficient funds to clean up all hazardous waste sites and to prevent the creation of future hazards due to improper disposal of toxic wastes into the state's land and waters.

(3) Many farmers and small business owners who have followed the law with respect to their uses of pesticides and other chemicals nonetheless may face devastating economic consequences because their uses have contaminated the environment or the water supplies of their neighbors. With a source of funds, the state may assist these farmers and business owners, as well as those persons who sustain damages, such as the loss of their drinking water supplies, as a result of the contamination.

(4) It is in the public's interest to efficiently use our finite land base, to integrate our land use planning policies with our clean-up policies, and to clean up and reuse contaminated industrial properties in order to minimize industrial development pressures on undeveloped land and to make clean land available for future social use.

(5) Because it is often difficult or impossible to allocate responsibility among persons liable for hazardous waste sites and because it is essential that sites be cleaned up well and expeditiously, each responsible person should be liable jointly and severally.

(6) Because releases of hazardous substances can adversely affect the health and welfare of the public, the environment, and property values, it is in the public interest that affected communities be notified of where releases of hazardous substances have occurred and what is being done to clean them up. [2002 c 288 s 1; 1994 c 254 s 1; 1989 c 2 s 1 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.010.]

**Severability—2002 c 288:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2002 c 288 s 5.]

**RCW 70A.305.020 Definitions.** The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Agreed order" means an order issued by the department under this chapter with which the potentially liable person or prospective purchaser receiving the order agrees to comply. An agreed order may be used to require or approve any cleanup or other remedial actions but it is not a settlement under RCW 70A.305.040(4) and shall not contain a covenant not to sue, or provide protection from claims for contribution, or provide eligibility for public funding of remedial actions under RCW 70A.305.190(4)(a)(v) and (vi).

(2) "Area-wide groundwater contamination" means groundwater contamination on multiple adjacent properties with different ownerships consisting of hazardous substances from multiple sources that have resulted in commingled plumes of contaminated groundwater that are not practicable to address separately.

(3) "Brownfield property" means previously developed and currently abandoned or underutilized real property and adjacent surface waters and sediment where environmental, economic, or community reuse objectives are hindered by the release or threatened

release of hazardous substances that the department has determined requires remedial action under this chapter or that the United States environmental protection agency has determined requires remedial action under the federal cleanup law.

(4) "City" means a city or town.

(5) "Department" means the department of ecology.

(6) "Director" means the director of ecology or the director's designee.

(7) "Environmental covenant" has the same meaning as defined in RCW 64.70.020.

(8) "Facility" means (a) any building, structure, installation, equipment, pipe or pipeline (including any pipe into a sewer or publicly owned treatment works), well, pit, pond, lagoon, impoundment, ditch, landfill, storage container, motor vehicle, rolling stock, vessel, or aircraft, or (b) any site or area where a hazardous substance, other than a consumer product in consumer use, has been deposited, stored, disposed of, or placed, or otherwise come to be located.

(9) "Federal cleanup law" means the federal comprehensive environmental response, compensation, and liability act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 9601 et seq., as amended by Public Law 99-499.

(10)(a) "Fiduciary" means a person acting for the benefit of another party as a bona fide trustee; executor; administrator; custodian; guardian of estates or guardian ad litem; receiver; conservator; committee of estates of incapacitated persons; trustee in bankruptcy; trustee, under an indenture agreement, trust agreement, lease, or similar financing agreement, for debt securities, certificates of interest or certificates of participation in debt securities, or other forms of indebtedness as to which the trustee is not, in the capacity of trustee, the lender. Except as provided in subsection (22)(b)(iii) of this section, the liability of a fiduciary under this chapter shall not exceed the assets held in the fiduciary capacity.

(b) "Fiduciary" does not mean:

(i) A person acting as a fiduciary with respect to a trust or other fiduciary estate that was organized for the primary purpose of, or is engaged in, actively carrying on a trade or business for profit, unless the trust or other fiduciary estate was created as part of, or to facilitate, one or more estate plans or because of the incapacity of a natural person;

(ii) A person who acquires ownership or control of a facility with the objective purpose of avoiding liability of the person or any other person. It is prima facie evidence that the fiduciary acquired ownership or control of the facility to avoid liability if the facility is the only substantial asset in the fiduciary estate at the time the facility became subject to the fiduciary estate;

(iii) A person who acts in a capacity other than that of a fiduciary or in a beneficiary capacity and in that capacity directly or indirectly benefits from a trust or fiduciary relationship;

(iv) A person who is a beneficiary and fiduciary with respect to the same fiduciary estate, and who while acting as a fiduciary receives benefits that exceed customary or reasonable compensation, and incidental benefits permitted under applicable law;

(v) A person who is a fiduciary and receives benefits that substantially exceed customary or reasonable compensation, and incidental benefits permitted under applicable law; or

(vi) A person who acts in the capacity of trustee of state or federal lands or resources.

(11) "Fiduciary capacity" means the capacity of a person holding title to a facility, or otherwise having control of an interest in the facility pursuant to the exercise of the responsibilities of the person as a fiduciary.

(12) "Foreclosure and its equivalents" means purchase at a foreclosure sale, acquisition, or assignment of title in lieu of foreclosure, termination of a lease, or other repossession, acquisition of a right to title or possession, an agreement in satisfaction of the obligation, or any other comparable formal or informal manner, whether pursuant to law or under warranties, covenants, conditions, representations, or promises from the borrower, by which the holder acquires title to or possession of a facility securing a loan or other obligation.

(13) "Hazardous substance" means:

(a) Any dangerous or extremely hazardous waste as defined in RCW 70A.300.010 (1) and (7), or any dangerous or extremely dangerous waste designated by rule pursuant to chapter 70A.300 RCW;

(b) Any hazardous substance as defined in RCW 70A.300.010(10) or any hazardous substance as defined by rule pursuant to chapter 70A.300 RCW;

(c) Any substance that, on March 1, 1989, is a hazardous substance under section 101(14) of the federal cleanup law, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 9601(14);

(d) Petroleum or petroleum products; and

(e) Any substance or category of substances, including solid waste decomposition products, determined by the director by rule to present a threat to human health or the environment if released into the environment.

The term hazardous substance does not include any of the following when contained in an underground storage tank from which there is not a release: Crude oil or any fraction thereof or petroleum, if the tank is in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local law.

(14) "Holder" means a person who holds indicia of ownership primarily to protect a security interest. A holder includes the initial holder such as the loan originator, any subsequent holder such as a successor-in-interest or subsequent purchaser of the security interest on the secondary market, a guarantor of an obligation, surety, or any other person who holds indicia of ownership primarily to protect a security interest, or a receiver, court-appointed trustee, or other person who acts on behalf or for the benefit of a holder. A holder can be a public or privately owned financial institution, receiver, conservator, loan guarantor, or other similar persons that loan money or guarantee repayment of a loan. Holders typically are banks or savings and loan institutions but may also include others such as insurance companies, pension funds, or private individuals that engage in loaning of money or credit.

(15) "Independent remedial actions" means remedial actions conducted without department oversight or approval, and not under an order, agreed order, or consent decree.

(16) "Indicia of ownership" means evidence of a security interest, evidence of an interest in a security interest, or evidence of an interest in a facility securing a loan or other obligation, including any legal or equitable title to a facility acquired incident to foreclosure and its equivalents. Evidence of such interests

includes, mortgages, deeds of trust, sellers interest in a real estate contract, liens, surety bonds, and guarantees of obligations, title held pursuant to a lease financing transaction in which the lessor does not select initially the leased facility, or legal or equitable title obtained pursuant to foreclosure and their equivalents. Evidence of such interests also includes assignments, pledges, or other rights to or other forms of encumbrance against the facility that are held primarily to protect a security interest.

(17) "Industrial properties" means properties that are or have been characterized by, or are to be committed to, traditional industrial uses such as processing or manufacturing of materials, marine terminal and transportation areas and facilities, fabrication, assembly, treatment, or distribution of manufactured products, or storage of bulk materials, that are either:

(a) Zoned for industrial use by a city or county conducting land use planning under chapter 36.70A RCW; or

(b) For counties not planning under chapter 36.70A RCW and the cities within them, zoned for industrial use and adjacent to properties currently used or designated for industrial purposes.

(18) "Institutional controls" means measures undertaken to limit or prohibit activities that may interfere with the integrity of a remedial action or result in exposure to or migration of hazardous substances at a site. "Institutional controls" include environmental covenants.

(19) "Local government" means any political subdivision of the state, including a town, city, county, special purpose district, or other municipal corporation, including brownfield renewal authority created under RCW 70A.305.160.

(20) "Model remedy" or "model remedial action" means a set of technologies, procedures, and monitoring protocols identified by the department for use in routine types of clean-up projects at facilities that have common features and lower risk to human health and the environment.

(21) "Operating a facility primarily to protect a security interest" occurs when all of the following are met: (a) Operating the facility where the borrower has defaulted on the loan or otherwise breached the security agreement; (b) operating the facility to preserve the value of the facility as an ongoing business; (c) the operation is being done in anticipation of a sale, transfer, or assignment of the facility; and (d) the operation is being done primarily to protect a security interest. Operating a facility for longer than one year prior to foreclosure or its equivalents shall be presumed to be operating the facility for other than to protect a security interest.

(22) "Owner or operator" means:

(a) Any person with any ownership interest in the facility or who exercises any control over the facility; or

(b) In the case of an abandoned facility, any person who had owned, or operated, or exercised control over the facility any time before its abandonment;

The term does not include:

(i) An agency of the state or unit of local government which acquired ownership or control through a drug forfeiture action under RCW 69.50.505, or involuntarily through bankruptcy, tax delinquency, abandonment, or other circumstances in which the government involuntarily acquires title. This exclusion does not apply to an agency of the state or unit of local government which has caused or

contributed to the release or threatened release of a hazardous substance from the facility;

(ii) A person who, without participating in the management of a facility, holds indicia of ownership primarily to protect the person's security interest in the facility. Holders after foreclosure and its equivalent and holders who engage in any of the activities identified in subsection (23)(e) through (g) of this section shall not lose this exemption provided the holder complies with all of the following:

(A) The holder properly maintains the environmental compliance measures already in place at the facility;

(B) The holder complies with the reporting requirements in the rules adopted under this chapter;

(C) The holder complies with any order issued to the holder by the department to abate an imminent or substantial endangerment;

(D) The holder allows the department or potentially liable persons under an order, agreed order, or settlement agreement under this chapter access to the facility to conduct remedial actions and does not impede the conduct of such remedial actions;

(E) Any remedial actions conducted by the holder are in compliance with any preexisting requirements identified by the department, or, if the department has not identified such requirements for the facility, the remedial actions are conducted consistent with the rules adopted under this chapter; and

(F) The holder does not exacerbate an existing release. The exemption in this subsection (22)(b)(ii) does not apply to holders who cause or contribute to a new release or threatened release or who are otherwise liable under RCW 70A.305.040(1)(b), (c), (d), and (e); provided, however, that a holder shall not lose this exemption if it establishes that any such new release has been remediated according to the requirements of this chapter and that any hazardous substances remaining at the facility after remediation of the new release are divisible from such new release;

(iii) A fiduciary in his, her, or its personal or individual capacity. This exemption does not preclude a claim against the assets of the estate or trust administered by the fiduciary or against a nonemployee agent or independent contractor retained by a fiduciary. This exemption also does not apply to the extent that a person is liable under this chapter independently of the person's ownership as a fiduciary or for actions taken in a fiduciary capacity which cause or contribute to a new release or exacerbate an existing release of hazardous substances. This exemption applies provided that, to the extent of the fiduciary's powers granted by law or by the applicable governing instrument granting fiduciary powers, the fiduciary complies with all of the following:

(A) The fiduciary properly maintains the environmental compliance measures already in place at the facility;

(B) The fiduciary complies with the reporting requirements in the rules adopted under this chapter;

(C) The fiduciary complies with any order issued to the fiduciary by the department to abate an imminent or substantial endangerment;

(D) The fiduciary allows the department or potentially liable persons under an order, agreed order, or settlement agreement under this chapter access to the facility to conduct remedial actions and does not impede the conduct of such remedial actions;

(E) Any remedial actions conducted by the fiduciary are in compliance with any preexisting requirements identified by the department, or, if the department has not identified such requirements

for the facility, the remedial actions are conducted consistent with the rules adopted under this chapter; and

(F) The fiduciary does not exacerbate an existing release.

The exemption in this subsection (22)(b)(iii) does not apply to fiduciaries who cause or contribute to a new release or threatened release or who are otherwise liable under RCW 70A.305.040(1)(b), (c), (d), and (e); provided however, that a fiduciary shall not lose this exemption if it establishes that any such new release has been remediated according to the requirements of this chapter and that any hazardous substances remaining at the facility after remediation of the new release are divisible from such new release. The exemption in this subsection (22)(b)(iii) also does not apply where the fiduciary's powers to comply with this subsection (22)(b)(iii) are limited by a governing instrument created with the objective purpose of avoiding liability under this chapter or of avoiding compliance with this chapter; or

(iv) Any person who has any ownership interest in, operates, or exercises control over real property where a hazardous substance has come to be located solely as a result of migration of the hazardous substance to the real property through the groundwater from a source off the property, if:

(A) The person can demonstrate that the hazardous substance has not been used, placed, managed, or otherwise handled on the property in a manner likely to cause or contribute to a release of the hazardous substance that has migrated onto the property;

(B) The person has not caused or contributed to the release of the hazardous substance;

(C) The person does not engage in activities that damage or interfere with the operation of remedial actions installed on the person's property or engage in activities that result in exposure of humans or the environment to the contaminated groundwater that has migrated onto the property;

(D) If requested, the person allows the department, potentially liable persons who are subject to an order, agreed order, or consent decree, and the authorized employees, agents, or contractors of each, access to the property to conduct remedial actions required by the department. The person may attempt to negotiate an access agreement before allowing access; and

(E) Legal withdrawal of groundwater does not disqualify a person from the exemption in this subsection (22)(b)(iv).

(23) "Participation in management" means exercising decision-making control over the borrower's operation of the facility, environmental compliance, or assuming or manifesting responsibility for the overall management of the enterprise encompassing the day-to-day decision making of the enterprise.

The term does not include any of the following: (a) A holder with the mere capacity or ability to influence, or the unexercised right to control facility operations; (b) a holder who conducts or requires a borrower to conduct an environmental audit or an environmental site assessment at the facility for which indicia of ownership is held; (c) a holder who requires a borrower to come into compliance with any applicable laws or regulations at the facility for which indicia of ownership is held; (d) a holder who requires a borrower to conduct remedial actions including setting minimum requirements, but does not otherwise control or manage the borrower's remedial actions or the scope of the borrower's remedial actions except to prepare a facility for sale, transfer, or assignment; (e) a holder who engages in workout

or policing activities primarily to protect the holder's security interest in the facility; (f) a holder who prepares a facility for sale, transfer, or assignment or requires a borrower to prepare a facility for sale, transfer, or assignment; (g) a holder who operates a facility primarily to protect a security interest, or requires a borrower to continue to operate, a facility primarily to protect a security interest; and (h) a prospective holder who, as a condition of becoming a holder, requires an owner or operator to conduct an environmental audit, conduct an environmental site assessment, come into compliance with any applicable laws or regulations, or conduct remedial actions prior to holding a security interest is not participating in the management of the facility.

(24) "Person" means an individual, firm, corporation, association, partnership, consortium, joint venture, commercial entity, state government agency, unit of local government, federal government agency, or Indian tribe.

(25) "Policing activities" means actions the holder takes to ensure that the borrower complies with the terms of the loan or security interest or actions the holder takes or requires the borrower to take to maintain the value of the security. Policing activities include: Requiring the borrower to conduct remedial actions at the facility during the term of the security interest; requiring the borrower to comply or come into compliance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental and other laws, regulations, and permits during the term of the security interest; securing or exercising authority to monitor or inspect the facility including on-site inspections, or to monitor or inspect the borrower's business or financial condition during the term of the security interest; or taking other actions necessary to adequately police the loan or security interest such as requiring a borrower to comply with any warranties, covenants, conditions, representations, or promises from the borrower.

(26) "Potentially liable person" means any person whom the department finds, based on credible evidence, to be liable under RCW 70A.305.040. The department shall give notice to any such person and allow an opportunity for comment before making the finding, unless an emergency requires otherwise.

(27) "Prepare a facility for sale, transfer, or assignment" means to secure access to the facility; perform routine maintenance on the facility; remove inventory, equipment, or structures; properly maintain environmental compliance measures already in place at the facility; conduct remedial actions to cleanup releases at the facility; or to perform other similar activities intended to preserve the value of the facility where the borrower has defaulted on the loan or otherwise breached the security agreement or after foreclosure and its equivalents and in anticipation of a pending sale, transfer, or assignment, primarily to protect the holder's security interest in the facility. A holder can prepare a facility for sale, transfer, or assignment for up to one year prior to foreclosure and its equivalents and still stay within the security interest exemption in subsection (22) (b) (ii) of this section.

(28) "Primarily to protect a security interest" means the indicia of ownership is held primarily for the purpose of securing payment or performance of an obligation. The term does not include indicia of ownership held primarily for investment purposes nor indicia of ownership held primarily for purposes other than as protection for a security interest. A holder may have other, secondary reasons, for

maintaining indicia of ownership, but the primary reason must be for protection of a security interest. Holding indicia of ownership after foreclosure or its equivalents for longer than five years shall be considered to be holding the indicia of ownership for purposes other than primarily to protect a security interest. For facilities that have been acquired through foreclosure or its equivalents prior to July 23, 1995, this five-year period shall begin as of July 23, 1995.

(29) "Prospective purchaser" means a person who is not currently liable for remedial action at a facility and who proposes to purchase, redevelop, or reuse the facility.

(30) "Public notice" means, at a minimum, adequate notice mailed to all persons who have made timely request of the department and to persons residing in the potentially affected vicinity of the proposed action; mailed to appropriate news media; published in the newspaper of largest circulation in the city or county of the proposed action; and opportunity for interested persons to comment.

(31) "Redevelopment opportunity zone" means a geographic area designated under RCW 70A.305.150.

(32) "Release" means any intentional or unintentional entry of any hazardous substance into the environment, including but not limited to the abandonment or disposal of containers of hazardous substances.

(33) "Remedy" or "remedial action" means any action or expenditure consistent with the purposes of this chapter to identify, eliminate, or minimize any threat or potential threat posed by hazardous substances to human health or the environment including any investigative and monitoring activities with respect to any release or threatened release of a hazardous substance and any health assessments or health effects studies conducted in order to determine the risk or potential risk to human health.

(34) "Security interest" means an interest in a facility created or established for the purpose of securing a loan or other obligation. Security interests include deeds of trusts, sellers interest in a real estate contract, liens, legal, or equitable title to a facility acquired incident to foreclosure and its equivalents, and title pursuant to lease financing transactions. Security interests may also arise from transactions such as sale and leasebacks, conditional sales, installment sales, trust receipt transactions, certain assignments, factoring agreements, accounts receivable financing arrangements, easements, and consignments, if the transaction creates or establishes an interest in a facility for the purpose of securing a loan or other obligation.

(35) "Workout activities" means those actions by which a holder, at any time prior to foreclosure and its equivalents, seeks to prevent, cure, or mitigate a default by the borrower or obligor; or to preserve, or prevent the diminution of, the value of the security. Workout activities include: Restructuring or renegotiating the terms of the security interest; requiring payment of additional rent or interest; exercising forbearance; requiring or exercising rights pursuant to an assignment of accounts or other amounts owed to an obligor; requiring or exercising rights pursuant to an escrow agreement pertaining to amounts owed to an obligor; providing specific or general financial or other advice, suggestions, counseling, or guidance; and exercising any right or remedy the holder is entitled to by law or under any warranties, covenants, conditions, representations, or promises from the borrower. [2020 c 20 s 1306. Prior: 2013 2nd sp.s. c 1 s 2; 2007 c 104 s 18; 2005 c 191 s 1; 1998 c

6 s 1; 1997 c 406 s 2; 1995 c 70 s 1; 1994 c 254 s 2; 1989 c 2 s 2 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.020.]

**Findings—Intent—2013 2nd sp.s. c 1:** "The legislature finds that there are a large number of toxic waste sites that have been identified in the department of ecology's priority list as ready for immediate cleanup. The legislature further finds that addressing the cleanup of these toxic waste sites will provide needed jobs to citizens of Washington state. It is the intent of the legislature to prioritize the spending of revenues under chapter 70.105D RCW, the model toxics control act, on cleaning up the most toxic sites, while also providing jobs in communities around the state." [2013 2nd sp.s. c 1 s 1.]

**Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 1:** "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, 2013." [2013 2nd sp.s. c 1 s 20.]

**Application—Construction—2007 c 104:** See RCW 64.70.015.

**RCW 70A.305.030 Department's powers and duties.** (1) The department may exercise the following powers in addition to any other powers granted by law:

(a) Investigate, provide for investigating, or require potentially liable persons to investigate any releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, including but not limited to inspecting, sampling, or testing to determine the nature or extent of any release or threatened release. If there is a reasonable basis to believe that a release or threatened release of a hazardous substance may exist, the department's authorized employees, agents, or contractors may enter upon any property and conduct investigations. The department shall give reasonable notice before entering property unless an emergency prevents such notice. The department may by subpoena require the attendance or testimony of witnesses and the production of documents or other information that the department deems necessary;

(b) Conduct, provide for conducting, or require potentially liable persons to conduct remedial actions (including investigations under (a) of this subsection) to remedy releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances. In carrying out such powers, the department's authorized employees, agents, or contractors may enter upon property. The department must give reasonable notice before entering property unless an emergency prevents such notice. In conducting, providing for, or requiring remedial action, the department must give preference to permanent solutions to the maximum extent practicable and must provide for or require adequate monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the remedial action;

(c) Indemnify contractors retained by the department for carrying out investigations and remedial actions, but not for any contractor's reckless or willful misconduct;

(d) Carry out all state programs authorized under the federal cleanup law and the federal resource, conservation, and recovery act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 6901 et seq., as amended;

(e) Classify substances as hazardous substances for purposes of RCW 70A.305.020 and classify substances and products as hazardous substances for purposes of RCW 82.21.020(1);

(f) Issue orders or enter into consent decrees or agreed orders that include, or issue written opinions under RCW 70A.305.170 that may be conditioned upon, environmental covenants where necessary to protect human health and the environment from a release or threatened release of a hazardous substance from a facility. Prior to establishing an environmental covenant under this subsection, the department must consult with and seek comment from a city or county department with land use planning authority for real property subject to the environmental covenant;

(g) Enforce the application of permanent and effective institutional controls that are necessary for a remedial action to be protective of human health and the environment and the notification requirements established in RCW 70A.305.110, and impose penalties for violations of that section consistent with RCW 70A.305.050;

(h) Require holders to conduct remedial actions necessary to abate an imminent or substantial endangerment pursuant to RCW 70A.305.020(22)(b)(ii)(C);

(i) In fulfilling the objectives of this chapter, the department must allocate staffing and financial assistance in a manner that considers both the reduction of human and environmental risks and the land reuse potential and planning for the facilities to be cleaned up. This does not preclude the department from allocating resources to a facility based solely on human or environmental risks;

(j) Establish model remedies for common categories of facilities, types of hazardous substances, types of media, or geographic areas to streamline and accelerate the selection of remedies for routine types of cleanups at facilities;

(i) When establishing a model remedy, the department must:

(A) Identify the requirements for characterizing a facility to select a model remedy, the applicability of the model remedy for use at a facility, and monitoring requirements;

(B) Describe how the model remedy meets clean-up standards and the requirements for selecting a remedy established by the department under this chapter; and

(C) Provide public notice and an opportunity to comment on the proposed model remedy and the conditions under which it may be used at a facility;

(ii) When developing model remedies, the department must solicit and consider proposals from qualified persons. The proposals must, in addition to describing the model remedy, provide the information required under (j)(i)(A) and (B) of this subsection;

(iii) If a facility meets the requirements for use of a model remedy, an analysis of the feasibility of alternative remedies is not required under this chapter. For department-conducted and department-supervised remedial actions, the department must provide public notice and consider public comments on the proposed use of a model remedy at a facility; and

(k) Take any other actions necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter, including the power to adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW.

(2) The department must immediately implement all provisions of this chapter to the maximum extent practicable, including investigative and remedial actions where appropriate. The department must adopt, and thereafter enforce, rules under chapter 34.05 RCW to:

(a) Provide for public participation, including at least (i) public notice of the development of investigative plans or remedial plans for releases or threatened releases and (ii) concurrent public notice of all compliance orders, agreed orders, enforcement orders, or notices of violation;

(b) Establish a hazard ranking system for hazardous waste sites;

(c) Provide for requiring the reporting by an owner or operator of releases of hazardous substances to the environment that may be a threat to human health or the environment within ninety days of discovery, including such exemptions from reporting as the department deems appropriate, however this requirement may not modify any existing requirements provided for under other laws;

(d) Establish reasonable deadlines not to exceed ninety days for initiating an investigation of a hazardous waste site after the department receives notice or otherwise receives information that the site may pose a threat to human health or the environment and other reasonable deadlines for remedying releases or threatened releases at the site;

(e) Publish and periodically update minimum clean-up standards for remedial actions at least as stringent as the clean-up standards under section 121 of the federal cleanup law, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 9621, and at least as stringent as all applicable state and federal laws, including health-based standards under state and federal law; and

(f) Apply industrial clean-up standards at industrial properties. Rules adopted under this subsection must ensure that industrial properties cleaned up to industrial standards cannot be converted to nonindustrial uses without approval from the department. The department may require that a property cleaned up to industrial standards is cleaned up to a more stringent applicable standard as a condition of conversion to a nonindustrial use. Industrial clean-up standards may not be applied to industrial properties where hazardous substances remaining at the property after remedial action pose a threat to human health or the environment in adjacent nonindustrial areas.

(3) To achieve and protect the state's long-term ecological health, the department must plan to clean up hazardous waste sites and prevent the creation of future hazards due to improper disposal of toxic wastes at a pace that matches the estimated cash resources in the model toxics control capital account. Estimated cash resources must consider the annual cash flow requirements of major projects that receive appropriations expected to cross multiple biennia.

(4) Before September 20th of each even-numbered year, the department must:

(a) Develop a comprehensive ten-year financing report in coordination with all local governments with clean-up responsibilities that identifies the projected biennial hazardous waste site remedial action needs that are eligible for funding from the model toxics control capital account;

(b) Work with local governments to develop working capital reserves to be incorporated in the ten-year financing report;

(c) Identify the projected remedial action needs for orphaned, abandoned, and other clean-up sites that are eligible for funding from the model toxics control capital account;

(d) Project the remedial action need, cost, revenue, and any recommended working capital reserve estimate to the next biennium's long-term remedial action needs from the model toxics control capital account, and submit this information to the appropriate standing

fiscal and environmental committees of the senate and house of representatives. This submittal must also include a ranked list of such remedial action projects for the model toxics control capital account. The submittal must also identify separate budget estimates for large, multiyear clean-up projects that exceed ten million dollars. The department must prepare its ten-year capital budget plan that is submitted to the office of financial management to reflect the separate budget estimates for these large clean-up projects and include information on the anticipated private and public funding obligations for completion of the relevant projects.

(5) By December 1st of each odd-numbered year, the department must provide the legislature and the public a report of the department's activities supported by appropriations from the model toxics control operating, capital, and stormwater accounts. The report must be prepared and displayed in a manner that allows the legislature and the public to easily determine the statewide and local progress made in cleaning up hazardous waste sites under this chapter. The report must include, at a minimum:

(a) The name, location, hazardous waste ranking, and a short description of each site on the hazardous sites list, and the date the site was placed on the hazardous waste sites list; and

(b) For sites where there are state contracts, grants, loans, or direct investments by the state:

(i) The amount of money from the model toxics control capital account used to conduct remedial actions at the site and the amount of that money recovered from potentially liable persons;

(ii) The actual or estimated start and end dates and the actual or estimated expenditures of funds authorized under this chapter for the following project phases:

(A) Emergency or interim actions, if needed;

(B) Remedial investigation;

(C) Feasibility study and selection of a remedy;

(D) Engineering design and construction of the selected remedy;

(E) Operation and maintenance or monitoring of the constructed remedy; and

(F) The final completion date.

(6) The department must establish a program to identify potential hazardous waste sites and to encourage persons to provide information about hazardous waste sites.

(7) For all facilities where an environmental covenant has been required under subsection (1)(f) of this section, including all facilities where the department has required an environmental covenant under an order, agreed order, or consent decree, or as a condition of a written opinion issued under the authority of RCW 70A.305.170, the department must periodically review the environmental covenant for effectiveness. The department must conduct a review at least once every five years after an environmental covenant is recorded.

(a) The review must consist of, at a minimum:

(i) A review of the title of the real property subject to the environmental covenant to determine whether the environmental covenant was properly recorded and, if applicable, amended or terminated;

(ii) A physical inspection of the real property subject to the environmental covenant to determine compliance with the environmental covenant, including whether any development or redevelopment of the real property has violated the terms of the environmental covenant; and

(iii) A review of the effectiveness of the environmental covenant in limiting or prohibiting activities that may interfere with the integrity of the remedial action or that may result in exposure to or migration of hazardous substances. This must include a review of available monitoring data.

(b) If an environmental covenant has been amended or terminated without proper authority, or if the terms of an environmental covenant have been violated, or if the environmental covenant is no longer effective in limiting or prohibiting activities that may interfere with the integrity of the remedial action or that may result in exposure to or migration of hazardous substances, then the department must take any and all appropriate actions necessary to ensure compliance with the environmental covenant and the policies and requirements of this chapter. [2020 c 20 s 1307; 2020 c 18 s 5. Prior: 2019 c 422 s 401; 2019 c 95 s 3; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 1 s 6; 2009 c 560 s 10; prior: 2007 c 446 s 1; 2007 c 225 s 1; 2007 c 104 s 19; 2002 c 288 s 3; 2001 c 291 s 401; 1997 c 406 s 3; 1995 c 70 s 2; prior: 1994 c 257 s 11; 1994 c 254 s 3; 1989 c 2 s 3 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.030.]

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 2020 c 18 s 5 and by 2020 c 20 s 1307, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Explanatory statement—2020 c 18:** See note following RCW 43.79A.040.

**Effective date—Intent—2019 c 422:** See notes following RCW 82.21.010.

**Intent—2019 c 95:** See note following RCW 70A.305.170.

**Findings—Intent—Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 1:** See notes following RCW 70A.305.020.

**Intent—Effective date—Disposition of property and funds—Assignment/delegation of contractual rights or duties—2009 c 560:** See notes following RCW 18.06.080.

**Application—Construction—2007 c 104:** See RCW 64.70.015.

**Effective date—2002 c 288 ss 2-4:** See note following RCW 70A.305.110.

**Severability—2002 c 288:** See note following RCW 70A.305.010.

**Part headings not law—Effective date—2001 c 291:** See notes following RCW 43.20A.360.

**Severability—1994 c 257:** See note following RCW 36.70A.270.

**RCW 70A.305.040 Standard of liability—Settlement.** (1) Except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, the following persons are liable with respect to a facility:

- (a) The owner or operator of the facility;
  - (b) Any person who owned or operated the facility at the time of disposal or release of the hazardous substances;
  - (c) Any person who owned or possessed a hazardous substance and who by contract, agreement, or otherwise arranged for disposal or treatment of the hazardous substance at the facility, or arranged with a transporter for transport for disposal or treatment of the hazardous substances at the facility, or otherwise generated hazardous wastes disposed of or treated at the facility;
  - (d) Any person (i) who accepts or accepted any hazardous substance for transport to a disposal, treatment, or other facility selected by such person from which there is a release or a threatened release for which remedial action is required, unless such facility, at the time of disposal or treatment, could legally receive such substance; or (ii) who accepts a hazardous substance for transport to such a facility and has reasonable grounds to believe that such facility is not operated in accordance with chapter 70A.300 RCW; and
  - (e) Any person who both sells a hazardous substance and is responsible for written instructions for its use if (i) the substance is used according to the instructions and (ii) the use constitutes a release for which remedial action is required at the facility.
- (2) Each person who is liable under this section is strictly liable, jointly and severally, for all remedial action costs and for all natural resource damages resulting from the releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances. The attorney general, at the request of the department, is empowered to recover all costs and damages from persons liable therefor.
- (3) The following persons are not liable under this section:
- (a) Any person who can establish that the release or threatened release of a hazardous substance for which the person would be otherwise responsible was caused solely by:
    - (i) An act of God;
    - (ii) An act of war; or
    - (iii) An act or omission of a third party (including but not limited to a trespasser) other than (A) an employee or agent of the person asserting the defense, or (B) any person whose act or omission occurs in connection with a contractual relationship existing, directly or indirectly, with the person asserting this defense to liability. This defense only applies where the person asserting the defense has exercised the utmost care with respect to the hazardous substance, the foreseeable acts or omissions of the third party, and the foreseeable consequences of those acts or omissions;
  - (b) Any person who is an owner, past owner, or purchaser of a facility and who can establish by a preponderance of the evidence that at the time the facility was acquired by the person, the person had no knowledge or reason to know that any hazardous substance, the release or threatened release of which has resulted in or contributed to the need for the remedial action, was released or disposed of on, in, or at the facility. This subsection (3)(b) is limited as follows:
    - (i) To establish that a person had no reason to know, the person must have undertaken, at the time of acquisition, all appropriate inquiry into the previous ownership and uses of the property, consistent with good commercial or customary practice in an effort to minimize liability. Any court interpreting this subsection (3)(b) shall take into account any specialized knowledge or experience on the part of the person, the relationship of the purchase price to the value of the property if uncontaminated, commonly known or reasonably

ascertainable information about the property, the obviousness of the presence or likely presence of contamination at the property, and the ability to detect such contamination by appropriate inspection;

(ii) The defense contained in this subsection (3)(b) is not available to any person who had actual knowledge of the release or threatened release of a hazardous substance when the person owned the real property and who subsequently transferred ownership of the property without first disclosing such knowledge to the transferee;

(iii) The defense contained in this subsection (3)(b) is not available to any person who, by any act or omission, caused or contributed to the release or threatened release of a hazardous substance at the facility;

(c) Any natural person who uses a hazardous substance lawfully and without negligence for any personal or domestic purpose in or near a dwelling or accessory structure when that person is: (i) A resident of the dwelling; (ii) a person who, without compensation, assists the resident in the use of the substance; or (iii) a person who is employed by the resident, but who is not an independent contractor;

(d) Any person who, for the purpose of growing food crops, applies pesticides or fertilizers without negligence and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

(4) There may be no settlement by the state with any person potentially liable under this chapter except in accordance with this section.

(a) The attorney general may agree to a settlement with any potentially liable person only if the department finds, after public notice and any required hearing, that the proposed settlement would lead to a more expeditious cleanup of hazardous substances in compliance with clean-up standards under RCW 70A.305.030(2)(e) and with any remedial orders issued by the department. Whenever practicable and in the public interest, the attorney general may expedite such a settlement with persons whose contribution is insignificant in amount and toxicity. A hearing shall be required only if at least ten persons request one or if the department determines a hearing is necessary.

(b) A settlement agreement under this section shall be entered as a consent decree issued by a court of competent jurisdiction.

(c) A settlement agreement may contain a covenant not to sue only of a scope commensurate with the settlement agreement in favor of any person with whom the attorney general has settled under this section. Any covenant not to sue shall contain a reopener clause which requires the court to amend the covenant not to sue if factors not known at the time of entry of the settlement agreement are discovered and present a previously unknown threat to human health or the environment.

(d) A party who has resolved its liability to the state under this section shall not be liable for claims for contribution regarding matters addressed in the settlement. The settlement does not discharge any of the other liable parties but it reduces the total potential liability of the others to the state by the amount of the settlement.

(e) If the state has entered into a consent decree with an owner or operator under this section, the state shall not enforce this chapter against any owner or operator who is a successor in interest to the settling party unless under the terms of the consent decree the state could enforce against the settling party, if:

(i) The successor owner or operator is liable with respect to the facility solely due to that person's ownership interest or operator

status acquired as a successor in interest to the owner or operator with whom the state has entered into a consent decree; and

(ii) The stay of enforcement under this subsection does not apply if the consent decree was based on circumstances unique to the settling party that do not exist with regard to the successor in interest, such as financial hardship. For consent decrees entered into before July 27, 1997, at the request of a settling party or a potential successor owner or operator, the attorney general shall issue a written opinion on whether a consent decree contains such unique circumstances. For all other consent decrees, such unique circumstances shall be specified in the consent decree.

(f) Any person who is not subject to enforcement by the state under (e) of this subsection is not liable for claims for contribution regarding matters addressed in the settlement.

(5) (a) In addition to the settlement authority provided under subsection (4) of this section, the attorney general may agree to a settlement with a prospective purchaser, provided that:

(i) The settlement will yield substantial new resources to facilitate cleanup;

(ii) The settlement will expedite remedial action at the facility consistent with the rules adopted under this chapter; and

(iii) Based on available information, the department determines that the redevelopment or reuse of the facility is not likely to contribute to the existing release or threatened release, interfere with remedial actions that may be needed at the facility, or increase health risks to persons at or in the vicinity of the facility.

(b) The legislature recognizes that the state does not have adequate resources to participate in all property transactions involving contaminated property. The primary purpose of this subsection (5) is to promote the cleanup and reuse of brownfield property. The attorney general and the department may give priority to settlements that will provide a substantial public benefit in addition to cleanup.

(c) A settlement entered under this subsection is governed by subsection (4) of this section.

(6) As an alternative to a settlement under subsection (5) of this section, the department may enter into an agreed order with a prospective purchaser of a property within a designated redevelopment opportunity zone. The agreed order is subject to the limitations in RCW 70A.305.020(1), but stays enforcement by the department under this chapter regarding remedial actions required by the agreed order as long as the prospective purchaser complies with the requirements of the agreed order.

(7) Nothing in this chapter affects or modifies in any way any person's right to seek or obtain relief under other statutes or under common law, including but not limited to damages for injury or loss resulting from a release or threatened release of a hazardous substance. No settlement by the department or remedial action ordered by a court or the department affects any person's right to obtain a remedy under common law or other statutes. [2020 c 20 s 1308; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 1 s 7; 1997 c 406 s 4; 1994 c 254 s 4; 1989 c 2 s 4 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.040.]

**Findings—Intent—Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 1:** See notes following RCW 70A.305.020.

**RCW 70A.305.050 Enforcement.** (1) With respect to any release, or threatened release, for which the department does not conduct or contract for conducting remedial action and for which the department believes remedial action is in the public interest, the director must issue orders or agreed orders requiring potentially liable persons to provide the remedial action. Any liable person, or prospective purchaser who has entered into an agreed order under RCW 70A.305.040(6), who refuses, without sufficient cause, to comply with an order or agreed order of the director is liable in an action brought by the attorney general for:

(a) Up to three times the amount of any costs incurred by the state as a result of the party's refusal to comply; and

(b) A civil penalty of up to twenty-five thousand dollars for each day the party refuses to comply.

The treble damages and civil penalty under this subsection apply to all recovery actions filed on or after March 1, 1989.

(2) Any person who incurs costs complying with an order issued under subsection (1) of this section may petition the department for reimbursement of those costs. If the department refuses to grant reimbursement, the person may within thirty days thereafter file suit and recover costs by proving that he or she was not a liable person under RCW 70A.305.040 and that the costs incurred were reasonable.

(3) The attorney general must seek, by filing an action if necessary, to recover the amounts spent by the department for investigative and remedial actions and orders, and agreed orders, including amounts spent prior to March 1, 1989.

(4) The attorney general may bring an action to secure such relief as is necessary to protect human health and the environment under this chapter.

(5) (a) Any person may commence a civil action to compel the department to perform any nondiscretionary duty under this chapter. At least thirty days before commencing the action, the person must give notice of intent to sue, unless a substantial endangerment exists. The court may award attorneys' fees and other costs to the prevailing party in the action.

(b) Civil actions under this section and RCW 70A.305.070 may be brought in the superior court of Thurston county or of the county in which the release or threatened release exists.

(6) Any person who fails to provide notification of releases consistent with RCW 70A.305.110 or who submits false information is liable in an action brought by the attorney general for a civil penalty of up to five thousand dollars per day for each day the party refuses to comply.

(7) Any person who owns real property or lender holding a mortgage on real property that is subject to a lien filed under RCW 70A.305.060 may petition the department to have the lien removed or the amount of the lien reduced. If, after consideration of the petition and the information supporting the petition, the department decides to deny the request, the person may, within ninety days after receipt of the department's denial, file suit for removal or reduction of the lien. The person is entitled to removal of a lien filed under RCW 70A.305.060(2)(a) if they can prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the person is not a liable party under RCW 70A.305.040. The person is entitled to a reduction of the amount of the lien if they can prove by a preponderance of the evidence:

(a) For liens filed under RCW 70A.305.060(2)(a), the amount of the lien exceeds the remedial action costs the department incurred related to cleanup of the real property; and

(b) For liens filed under RCW 70A.305.060(2)(c), the amount of the lien exceeds the remedial action costs the department incurred related to cleanup of the real property or exceeds the increase of the fair market value of the real property solely attributable to the remedial action conducted by the department.

(8) The expenditure of moneys under the model toxics control operating, capital, and stormwater accounts created in RCW 70A.305.180 through 70A.305.200 does not alter the liability of any person under this chapter, or the authority of the department under this chapter, including the authority to recover those moneys. [2020 c 20 s 1309; 2019 c 422 s 402; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 1 s 8; 2005 c 211 s 2; 2002 c 288 s 4; 1994 c 257 s 12; 1989 c 2 s 5 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.050.]

**Effective date—Intent—2019 c 422:** See notes following RCW 82.21.010.

**Findings—Intent—Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 1:** See notes following RCW 70A.305.020.

**Effective date—2002 c 288 ss 2-4:** See note following RCW 70A.305.110.

**Severability—2002 c 288:** See note following RCW 70A.305.010.

**Severability—1994 c 257:** See note following RCW 36.70A.270.

**RCW 70A.305.060 Lien authority.** (1) It is in the public interest for the department to recover remedial action costs incurred in discharging its responsibility under this chapter, as these recovered funds can then be applied to the cleanup of other facilities. Thus, in addition to other cost-recovery mechanisms provided under this chapter, this section is intended to facilitate the recovery of state funds spent on remedial actions by providing the department with lien authority. This will also prevent a facility owner or mortgagee from gaining a financial windfall from increased land value resulting from department-conducted remedial actions at the expense of the state taxpayers.

(2) If the state of Washington incurs remedial action costs relating to a remedial action of real property, and those remedial action costs are unrecovered by the state of Washington, the department may file a lien against that real property.

(a) Except as provided in (c) of this subsection, liens filed under this section shall have priority in rank over all other privileges, liens, monetary encumbrances, or other security interests affecting the real property, whenever incurred, filed, or recorded, except for the following liens:

(i) Local and special district property tax assessments; and

(ii) Mortgage liens recorded before liens or notices of intent to conduct remedial actions are recorded under this section.

(b) Liens filed pursuant to (a) and (c) of this subsection shall not exceed the remedial action costs incurred by the state.

(c) (i) If the real property for which the department has incurred remedial action costs is abandoned, the department may choose to limit the amount of the lien to the increase in the fair market value of the real property that is attributable to a remedial action conducted by the department. The increase in fair market value shall be determined by subtracting the county assessor's value of the real property for the most recent year prior to remedial action being initiated from the value of the real property after remedial action. The value of the real property after remedial action shall be determined by the bona fide purchase price of the real property or by a real estate appraiser retained by the department. Liens limited in this way have priority in rank over all other privileges, liens, monetary encumbrances, or other security interests affecting the real property, whenever incurred, filed, or recorded.

(ii) For the purposes of this subsection, "abandoned" means there has not been significant business activity on the real property for three years or property taxes owed on the real property are three years in arrears prior to the department incurring costs attributable to this lien.

(d) The department shall, when notifying potentially liable persons of their potential liability under RCW 70A.305.040, include a notice stating that if the department incurs remedial action costs relating to the remediation of real property and the costs are not recovered by the department, the department may file a lien against that real property under this section.

(e) Except for emergency remedial actions, the department must provide notice to the following persons before initiating remedial actions conducted by persons under contract to the department on real property on which a lien may be filed under this section:

(i) The real property owner;

(ii) Mortgagees;

(iii) Lienholders of record;

(iv) Persons known to the department to be conducting remedial actions at the facility at the time of such notice; and

(v) Persons known to the department to be under contract to conduct remedial actions at the facility at the time of such notice.

For emergency remedial actions, this notice shall be provided within thirty days after initiation of the emergency remedial actions.

(f) The department may record a copy of the notice in (e) of this subsection, along with a legal description of the property on which the remedial action will take place, with the county auditor in the county where the real property is located. If the department subsequently files a lien, the effective date of the lien will be the date this notice was recorded.

(3) Before filing a lien under this section, the department shall give the owner of real property on which the lien is to be filed and mortgagees and lienholders of record a notice of its intent to file a lien:

(a) The notice required under this subsection (3) must be sent by certified mail to the real property owner and mortgagees of record at the addresses listed in the recorded documents. If the real property owner is unknown or if a mailed notice is returned as undeliverable, the department shall provide notice by posting a legal notice in the newspaper of largest circulation in the county in which the site is located. The notice shall provide:

(i) A statement of the purpose of the lien;

(ii) A brief description of the real property to be affected by the lien;

(iii) A statement of the remedial action costs incurred by the state related to the real property affected by the lien;

(iv) A brief statement of facts showing probable cause that the real property is the subject of the remedial action costs incurred by the department; and

(v) The time period following service or other notice during which any recipient of the notice whose legal rights may be affected by the lien may comment on the notice.

(b) Any comments on the notice must be received by the department on or before thirty days following service or other provision of the notice of intent to file a lien.

(c) If no comments are received by the department, the lien may be filed on the real property immediately.

(d) If the department receives any comments on the lien, the department shall determine if there is probable cause for filing the certificate of lien. If the department determines there is probable cause, the department may file the lien. Any further challenge to the lien may only occur at the times specified under RCW 70A.305.070.

(e) If the department has reason to believe that exigent circumstances require the filing of a lien prior to giving notice under this subsection (3), or prior to the expiration of the time period for comments, the department may file the lien immediately. For the purposes of this subsection (3), exigent circumstances include, but are not limited to, an imminent bankruptcy filing by the real property owner, or the imminent transfer or sale of the real property subject to lien by the real property owner, or both.

(4) A lien filed under this section is effective when a statement of lien is filed with the county auditor in the county where the real property is located. The statement of lien must include a description of the real property subject to lien and the amount of the lien.

(5) Unless the department determines it is in the public interest to remove the lien, the lien continues until the liability for the remedial action costs have been satisfied through sale of the real property, foreclosure, or other means agreed to by the department. Any action for foreclosure of the lien shall be brought by the attorney general in a civil action in the court having jurisdiction and in the manner prescribed for the judicial foreclosure of a mortgage.

(6)(a) This section does not apply to real property owned by a local government or specialpurpose district or real property used solely for residential purposes and consisting of four residential units or less at the time the lien is recorded. This limitation does not apply to illegal drug manufacturing and storage sites under chapter 64.44 RCW.

(b) If the real property owner has consented to the department filing a lien on the real property, then only subsection (3)(a)(i) through (iii) of this section requiring notice to mortgagees and lienholders of record apply. [2020 c 20 s 1310; 2005 c 211 s 1. Formerly RCW 70.105D.055.]

**RCW 70A.305.070 Timing of review.** The department's investigative and remedial decisions under RCW 70A.305.030 and 70A.305.050, its decisions regarding filing a lien under RCW 70A.305.060, and its decisions regarding liable persons under RCW 70A.305.020, 70A.305.040, 70A.305.050, and 70A.305.060 shall be

reviewable exclusively in superior court and only at the following times: (1) In a cost recovery suit under RCW 70A.305.050(3); (2) in a suit by the department to enforce an order or an agreed order, or seek a civil penalty under this chapter; (3) in a suit for reimbursement under RCW 70A.305.050(2); (4) in a suit by the department to compel investigative or remedial action; (5) in a citizen's suit under RCW 70A.305.050(5); and (6) in a suit for removal or reduction of a lien under RCW 70A.305.050(7). Except in suits for reduction or removal of a lien under RCW 70A.305.050(7), the court shall uphold the department's actions unless they were arbitrary and capricious. In suits for reduction or removal of a lien under RCW 70A.305.050(7), the court shall review such suits pursuant to the standards set forth in RCW 70A.305.050(7). [2020 c 20 s 1311; 2007 c 104 s 20; 2005 c 211 s 3; 1994 c 257 s 13; 1989 c 2 s 6 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.060.]

**Application—Construction—2007 c 104:** See RCW 64.70.015.

**Severability—1994 c 257:** See note following RCW 36.70A.270.

**RCW 70A.305.080 Private right of action—Remedial action costs.**

Except as provided in RCW 70A.305.040(4) (d) and (f), a person may bring a private right of action, including a claim for contribution or for declaratory relief, against any other person liable under RCW 70A.305.040 for the recovery of remedial action costs. In the action, natural resource damages paid to the state under this chapter may also be recovered. Recovery shall be based on such equitable factors as the court determines are appropriate. Remedial action costs shall include reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses. Recovery of remedial action costs shall be limited to those remedial actions that, when evaluated as a whole, are the substantial equivalent of a department-conducted or department-supervised remedial action. Substantial equivalence shall be determined by the court with reference to the rules adopted by the department under this chapter. An action under this section may be brought after remedial action costs are incurred but must be brought within three years from the date remedial action confirms cleanup standards are met or within one year of May 12, 1993, whichever is later. The prevailing party in such an action shall recover its reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. This section applies to all causes of action regardless of when the cause of action may have arisen. To the extent a cause of action has arisen prior to May 12, 1993, this section applies retroactively, but in all other respects it applies prospectively. [2020 c 20 s 1312; 1997 c 406 s 6; 1993 c 326 s 1. Formerly RCW 70.105D.080.]

**Effective date—1993 c 326:** "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 shall take effect immediately [May 12, 1993]." [1993 c 326 s 2.]

**Severability—1993 c 326:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1993 c 326 s 3.]

**RCW 70A.305.090 Remedial actions—Exemption from procedural requirements.** (1) A person conducting a remedial action at a facility under a consent decree, order, or agreed order, and the department when it conducts a remedial action, are exempt from the procedural requirements of chapters 70A.15, 70A.205, 70A.300, 77.55, 90.48, and 90.58 RCW, and the procedural requirements of any laws requiring or authorizing local government permits or approvals for the remedial action. The department shall ensure compliance with the substantive provisions of chapters 70A.15, 70A.205, 70A.300, 77.55, 90.48, and 90.58 RCW, and the substantive provisions of any laws requiring or authorizing local government permits or approvals. The department shall establish procedures for ensuring that such remedial actions comply with the substantive requirements adopted pursuant to such laws, and shall consult with the state agencies and local governments charged with implementing these laws. The procedures shall provide an opportunity for comment by the public and by the state agencies and local governments that would otherwise implement the laws referenced in this section. Nothing in this section is intended to prohibit implementing agencies from charging a fee to the person conducting the remedial action to defray the costs of services rendered relating to the substantive requirements for the remedial action.

(2) An exemption in this section or in RCW 70A.15.3020, 70A.205.235, 70A.300.200, 77.55.061, 90.48.039, and 90.58.355 shall not apply if the department determines that the exemption would result in loss of approval from a federal agency necessary for the state to administer any federal law, including the federal resource conservation and recovery act, the federal clean water act, the federal clean air act, and the federal coastal zone management act. Such a determination by the department shall not affect the applicability of the exemptions to other statutes specified in this section. [2020 c 20 s 1313; 2003 c 39 s 30; 1994 c 257 s 14. Formerly RCW 70.105D.090.]

**Severability—1994 c 257:** See note following RCW 36.70A.270.

**RCW 70A.305.100 Grants to local governments—Statement of environmental benefits—Development of outcome-focused performance measures.** In providing grants to local governments, the department shall require grant recipients to incorporate the environmental benefits of the project into their grant applications, and the department shall utilize the statement of environmental benefit[s] in its prioritization and selection process. The department shall also develop appropriate outcome-focused performance measures to be used both for management and performance assessment of the grant program. To the extent possible, the department should coordinate its performance measure system with other natural resource-related agencies as defined in RCW 43.41.270. The department shall consult with affected interest groups in implementing this section. [2001 c 227 s 5. Formerly RCW 70.105D.100.]

**Findings—Intent—2001 c 227:** See note following RCW 43.41.270.

**RCW 70A.305.110 Releases of hazardous substances—Notice—Exemptions.** (1) Except as provided in subsection (5) of this section,

any owner or operator of a facility that is actively transitioning from operating under a federal permit for treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous waste issued under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 6925 to operating under the provisions of this chapter, who has information that a hazardous substance has been released to the environment at the owner or operator's facility that may be a threat to human health or the environment, shall issue a notice to the department within ninety days. The notice shall include a description of any remedial actions planned, completed, or underway.

(2) The notice must be posted in a visible, publicly accessible location on the facility, to remain in place until all remedial actions except confirmational monitoring are complete.

(3) After receiving the notice from the facility, the department must review the notice and mail a summary of its contents, along with any additional information deemed appropriate by the department, to:

(a) Each residence and landowner of a residence whose property boundary is within three hundred feet of the boundary of the property where the release occurred or if the release occurred from a pipeline or other facility that does not have a property boundary, within three hundred feet of the actual release;

(b) Each business and landowner of a business whose property boundary is within three hundred feet of the boundary of the property where the release occurred;

(c) Each residence, landowner of a residence, and business with a property boundary within the area where hazardous substances have come to be located as a result of the release;

(d) Neighborhood associations and community organizations representing an area within one mile of the facility and recognized by the city or county with jurisdiction within this area;

(e) The city, county, and local health district with jurisdiction within the areas described in (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection; and

(f) The department of health.

(4) A notice produced by a facility shall provide the following information:

(a) The common name of any hazardous substances released and, if available, the chemical abstract service registry number of these substances;

(b) The address of the facility where the release occurred;

(c) The date the release was discovered;

(d) The cause and date of the release, if known;

(e) The remedial actions being taken or planned to address the release;

(f) The potential health and environmental effects of the hazardous substances released; and

(g) The name, address, and telephone number of a contact person at the facility where the release occurred.

(5) The following releases are exempt from the notification requirements in this section:

(a) Application of pesticides and fertilizers for their intended purposes and according to label instructions;

(b) The lawful and nonnegligent use of hazardous household substances by a natural person for personal or domestic purposes;

(c) The discharge of hazardous substances in compliance with permits issued under chapter 70A.15, 90.48, or 90.56 RCW;

(d) De minimis amounts of any hazardous substance leaked or discharged onto the ground;

(e) The discharge of hazardous substances to a permitted wastewater treatment facility or from a permitted wastewater collection system or treatment facility as allowed by a facility's discharge permit;

(f) Any releases originating from a single-family or multifamily residence, including but not limited to the discharge of oil from a residential home heating oil tank with the capacity of five hundred gallons or less;

(g) Any spill on a public road, street, or highway or to surface waters of the state that has previously been reported to the United States coast guard and the state division of emergency management under chapter 90.56 RCW;

(h) Any release of hazardous substances to the air;

(i) Any release that occurs on agricultural land, including land used to grow trees for the commercial production of wood or wood fiber, that is at least five acres in size, when the effects of the release do not come within three hundred feet of any property boundary. For the purposes of this subsection, agricultural land includes incidental uses that are compatible with agricultural or silvicultural purposes, including, but not limited to, land used for the housing of the owner, operator, or employees, structures used for the storage or repair of equipment, machinery, and chemicals, and any paths or roads on the land; and

(j) Releases that, before January 1, 2003, have been previously reported to the department, or remediated in compliance with a settlement agreement under RCW 70A.305.040(4) or enforcement order or agreed order issued under this chapter or have been the subject of an opinion from the department under RCW 70A.305.170 that no further remedial action is required.

An exemption from the notification requirements of this section does not exempt the owner or operator of a facility from any other notification or reporting requirements, or imply a release from liability under this chapter.

(6) If a significant segment of the community to be notified speaks a language other than English, an appropriate translation of the notice must also be posted and mailed to the department in accordance with the requirements of this section.

(7) The facility where the release occurred is responsible for reimbursing the department within thirty days for the actual costs associated with the production and mailing of the notices under this section. [2020 c 20 s 1314; 2019 c 95 s 5; 2002 c 288 s 2. Formerly RCW 70A.305.170.]

**Intent—2019 c 95:** See note following RCW 70A.305.170.

**Effective date—2002 c 288 ss 2-4:** "Sections 2 through 4 of this act take effect January 1, 2003." [2002 c 288 s 6.]

**Severability—2002 c 288:** See note following RCW 70A.305.010.

**RCW 70A.305.120 Puget Sound partners.** When administering funds under this chapter, the department shall give preference only to Puget Sound partners, as defined in RCW 90.71.010, in comparison to other entities that are eligible to be included in the definition of Puget Sound partner. Entities that are not eligible to be a Puget Sound

partner due to geographic location, composition, exclusion from the scope of the Puget Sound action agenda developed by the Puget Sound partnership under RCW 90.71.310, or for any other reason, shall not be given less preferential treatment than Puget Sound partners. [2007 c 341 s 31. Formerly RCW 70.105D.120.]

**Effective date—2007 c 341:** See RCW 90.71.907.

**RCW 70A.305.130 Cleanup settlement account—Reporting requirements.** (1) The cleanup settlement account is created in the state treasury. The account is not intended to replace the model toxics control capital account established under RCW 70A.305.190. All receipts from the sources identified in subsection (2) of this section must be deposited into the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used only as identified in subsection (4) of this section.

(2) The following receipts must be deposited into the cleanup settlement account:

(a) Receipts from settlements or court orders that direct payment to the account and resolve a person's liability or potential liability under this chapter for either or both of the following:

(i) Conducting future remedial action at a specific facility, if it is not feasible to require the person to conduct the remedial action based on the person's financial insolvency, limited ability to pay, or insignificant contribution under RCW 70A.305.040(4)(a);

(ii) Assessing or addressing the injury to natural resources caused by the release of a hazardous substance from a specific facility; and

(b) Receipts from investment of the moneys in the account.

(3) If a settlement or court order does not direct payment of receipts described in subsection (2)(a) of this section into the cleanup settlement account, then the receipts from any payment to the state must be deposited into the model toxics control capital account.

(4) Expenditures from the cleanup settlement account may only be used to conduct remedial actions at the specific facility or to assess or address the injury to natural resources caused by the release of hazardous substances from that facility for which the moneys were deposited in the account. Conducting remedial actions or assessing or addressing injury to natural resources includes direct expenditures and indirect expenditures such as department oversight costs. During the 2009-2011 fiscal biennium, the legislature may transfer excess fund balances in the account into the \*state efficiency and restructuring account. Transfers of excess fund balances made under this section may be made only to the extent amounts transferred with required repayments do not impair the ten-year spending plan administered by the department of ecology for environmental remedial actions dedicated for any designated clean-up site associated with the Everett smelter and Tacoma smelter, including plumes, or former Asarco mine sites. The cleanup settlement account must be repaid with interest under provisions of the \*state efficiency and restructuring account.

(5) The department must track moneys received, interest earned, and moneys expended separately for each facility.

(6) After the department determines that all remedial actions at a specific facility, and all actions assessing or addressing injury to

natural resources caused by the release of hazardous substances from that facility, are completed, including payment of all related costs, any moneys remaining for the specific facility must be transferred to the model toxics control capital account established under RCW 70A.305.190.

(7) The department must provide the office of financial management and the fiscal committees of the legislature with a report by October 31st of each year regarding the activity within the cleanup settlement account during the previous fiscal year. [2020 c 20 s 1315; 2019 c 422 s 413; 2010 1st sp.s. c 37 s 947; 2008 c 106 s 1. Formerly RCW 70.105D.130.]

**\*Reviser's note:** The "state efficiency and restructuring account," RCW 43.79.515, was repealed by 2024 c 168 s 2.

**Effective date—Intent—2019 c 422:** See notes following RCW 82.21.010.

**Effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 37:** See note following RCW 13.06.050.

#### **RCW 70A.305.150 Designation of a redevelopment opportunity zone**

—**Criteria.** (1) A city or county may designate a geographic area within its jurisdiction as a redevelopment opportunity zone if the zone meets the criteria in this subsection and the city or county adopts a resolution that includes the following determinations and commitments:

(a) At least fifty percent of the upland properties in the zone are brownfield properties whether or not the properties are contiguous;

(b) The upland portions of the zone are comprised entirely of parcels of property either owned by the city or county or whose owner has provided consent in writing to have their property included within the zone;

(c) The cleanup of brownfield properties will be integrated with planning for the future uses of the properties and is consistent with the comprehensive land use plan for the zone; and

(d) The proposed properties lie within the incorporated area of a city or within an urban growth area designated under RCW 36.70A.110.

(2) A port district may designate a redevelopment opportunity zone when:

(a) The port district adopts a resolution that includes the determinations and commitments required under subsection (1)(a), (c), and (d) of this section and (c) of this subsection;

(b) The zone meets the criteria in subsection (1)(a), (c), and (d) of this section; and

(c) The port district either:

(i) Owns in fee all of the upland properties within the zone; or

(ii) Owns in fee at least fifty percent of the upland property in the zone, the owners of other parcels of upland property in the zone have provided consent in writing to have their property included in the zone, and the governing body of the city and county in which the zone lies approves of the designation by resolution. [2013 2nd sp.s. c 1 s 4. Formerly RCW 70.105D.150.]

**Findings—Intent—Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 1:** See notes following RCW 70A.305.020.

**RCW 70A.305.160 Brownfield renewal authority.** (1) A city, county, or port district may establish by resolution a brownfield renewal authority for the purpose of guiding and implementing the cleanup and reuse of properties within a designated redevelopment opportunity zone. Any combination of cities, counties, and port districts may establish a brownfield renewal authority through an interlocal agreement under chapter 39.34 RCW, and the brownfield renewal authority may exercise those powers as are authorized under chapter 39.34 RCW and under this chapter.

(2) A brownfield renewal authority must be governed by a board of directors selected as determined by the resolution or interlocal agreement establishing the authority.

(3) A brownfield renewal authority must be a separate legal entity and be deemed a municipal corporation. It has the power to: Sue and be sued; receive, account for, and disburse funds; employ personnel; and acquire or dispose of any interest in real or personal property within a redevelopment opportunity zone in the furtherance of the authority purposes. A brownfield renewal authority has the power to contract indebtedness and to issue and sell general obligation bonds pursuant to and in the manner provided for general county bonds in chapters 36.67 and 39.46 RCW and other applicable statutes, and to issue revenue bonds pursuant to and in the manner provided for revenue bonds in chapter 36.67 RCW and other applicable statutes.

(4) If the department determines that substantial progress has not been made on the plan approved under \*RCW 70A.305.140 by the brownfield renewal authority within six years of a city, county, or port district establishing a brownfield renewal authority, the department may require dissolution of the brownfield renewal authority. Upon dissolution of the brownfield renewal authority, except as provided in \*RCW 70A.305.140, all assets and liabilities transfer to the city, town, or port district establishing the brownfield renewal authority. [2020 c 20 s 1317; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 1 s 5. Formerly RCW 70.105D.160.]

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW 70A.305.140 was repealed by 2024 c 168 s 2.

**Findings—Intent—Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 1:** See notes following RCW 70A.305.020.

**RCW 70A.305.170 Establishment of program to provide informal advice and assistance—Collection of costs—Expedited process—Rules—Voluntary cleanup account.** (1) The department may establish a program to provide informal advice and assistance on the administrative and technical requirements of this chapter to persons who are conducting or otherwise interested in conducting independent remedial actions at facilities where there is a suspected or confirmed release of hazardous substances.

(a) Any advice or assistance is advisory only and is not binding on the department.

(b) As part of this advice and assistance, the department may provide written opinions on whether the independent remedial actions or proposals for those actions meet the substantive requirements of

this chapter or whether the department believes further remedial action is necessary at the facility.

(c) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to preclude the department from issuing a written opinion on whether further remedial action is necessary at any portion of the real property located within a facility, even if further remedial action is still necessary elsewhere at the same facility. A written opinion on a portion of a facility must also provide an opinion on the status of the facility as a whole.

(2) The department may collect, from persons requesting advice and assistance under the program, all costs incurred by the department in providing advice and assistance.

(a) To collect its costs, the department may use either a cost recovery structure or a fee structure, or both.

(i) A fee structure may include either a single fee or a series of fees for individual services.

(ii) The department may calculate fees based on the complexity of the contaminated site and other site-specific factors determined by the department.

(iii) The department may establish a separate fee and cost recovery structure for providing expedited advice and assistance under subsection (3) of this section.

(b) The department may waive collection of costs if the person requesting technical advice and assistance under the program commits to remediate contaminated real property for development of affordable housing, as determined by the department. Prior to waiving costs, the department must consider the requestor's ability to pay and the potential public benefit of the development. To ensure the real property is used for affordable housing, the department may file a lien against the real property pursuant to RCW 70A.305.060, require the person to record an interest in the real property in accordance with RCW 64.04.130, or use other means deemed by the department to be no less protective of the affordable housing use and the interests of the department.

(c) Except when providing expedited advice and assistance under subsection (3) of this section, the department may also waive collection of costs:

(i) For providing technical assistance in support of public participation;

(ii) For providing written opinions on a cleanup that qualifies for and appropriately uses a model remedy; or

(iii) Based on a person's ability to pay. If costs are waived, the department may file a lien against the real property for which the department has incurred the costs pursuant to RCW 70A.305.060.

(3) The department may offer an expedited process for providing informal advice and assistance under the program. Except as provided under subsection (2)(b) of this section, the department must collect, from persons requesting expedited advice and assistance, all costs incurred by the department in providing the advice and assistance. The department may establish conditions for requesting expedited advice and assistance.

(4) The department may adopt rules to implement the program. To ensure that the adoption of rules will not delay the implementation of independent remedial actions, the department may implement the cost waiver and expedited process specified in subsections (2)(b) and (3) of this section through interpretive guidance pending adoption of rules.

(5) The department must track the number of requests for reviews of planned or completed independent remedial actions under the program and establish performance measures to track how quickly the department is able to respond to those requests. The department's tracking system must include a category for tracking the length of time that elapses between the submission of a request for expedited advice and assistance on an independent remedial action at a facility under subsection (3) of this section and the issuance of a letter on the sufficiency of the cleanup at the facility.

(6) The state, the department, and officers and employees of the state are immune from all liability, and no cause of action of any nature may arise from any act or omission in providing, or failing to provide, informal advice and assistance under the program.

(7) The voluntary cleanup account is created in the state treasury. All receipts from the fees collected and costs recovered under the expedited process in subsection (3) of this section must be deposited into the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used only to support the expedited process in subsection (3) of this section. If the department suspends the expedited process, any moneys remaining in the account may be used to carry out the purposes of the program. The account must retain its interest earnings in accordance with RCW 43.84.092. [2020 c 20 s 1318; 2019 c 95 s 2. Formerly RCW 70.105D.180.]

**Intent—2019 c 95:** "Cleaning up and redeveloping contaminated properties is essential to the health and economic prosperity of our communities. Most cleanups are performed voluntarily by property owners and are driven by the sale or redevelopment of the properties. Many of these property owners request written opinions on the sufficiency of their voluntary cleanups from the department of ecology. Buyers and lenders often require these opinions when property owners sell or redevelop contaminated properties. Providing expedited reviews of voluntary cleanups would encourage and expedite more cleanup and redevelopment projects. It is the intent of the legislature to support the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated properties in our communities by providing the department of ecology with the additional tools and resources necessary for conducting expedited reviews of voluntary cleanups.

The availability of affordable housing is of vital importance to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the state. It is in the public interest to facilitate the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated and underutilized properties within our communities for affordable housing. It is the intent of the legislature to encourage voluntary cleanups of these properties for affordable housing development by waiving the department of ecology's costs of reviewing voluntary cleanups." [2019 c 95 s 1.]

**RCW 70A.305.180 Model toxics control operating account.** (1) The model toxics control operating account is hereby created in the state treasury.

(2) Moneys in the model toxics control operating account must be used only to carry out the purposes of this chapter, including but not limited to the following:

(a) The state's responsibility for hazardous waste planning, management, regulation, enforcement, technical assistance, and public education required under chapter 70A.300 RCW;

(b) The state's responsibility for solid waste planning, management, regulation, enforcement, technical assistance, and public education required under chapter 70A.205 RCW;

(c) The hazardous waste clean-up program required under this chapter;

(d) State matching funds required under federal cleanup law;

(e) Financial assistance for local programs and plans, including local solid waste financial assistance, in accordance with chapters 70A.405, 70A.205, 70A.214, 70A.224, and 70A.300 RCW;

(f) State government programs for the safe reduction, recycling, or disposal of paint and hazardous wastes from households, small businesses, and agriculture;

(g) Oil and hazardous materials spill prevention, preparedness, training, and response activities;

(h) Water and environmental health protection and monitoring programs;

(i) Programs authorized under chapter 70A.135 RCW;

(j) A public participation program;

(k) Development and demonstration of alternative management technologies designed to carry out the hazardous waste management priorities of RCW 70A.300.260;

(l) State agriculture and health programs for the safe use, reduction, recycling, or disposal of pesticides;

(m) Funding requirements to maintain receipt of federal funds under the federal solid waste disposal act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 6901 et seq.);

(n) Air quality programs and actions for reducing public exposure to toxic air pollution;

(o) Petroleum-based plastic or expanded polystyrene foam debris clean-up activities in fresh or marine waters; and

(p) For the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium, and solely to continue the policy of previous biennia, forest practices at the department of natural resources.

(3) Except for unanticipated receipts under RCW 43.79.260 through 43.79.282, moneys in model toxics control operating account may be spent only after appropriation by statute.

(4) One percent of the moneys collected under RCW 82.21.030 must be allocated only for public participation grants to persons who may be adversely affected by a release or threatened release of a hazardous substance and to not-for-profit public interest organizations. The primary purpose of these grants is to facilitate the participation by persons and organizations in the investigation and remedying of releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances and to implement the state's solid and hazardous waste management priorities. No grant may exceed sixty thousand dollars. Grants may be renewed annually. Moneys appropriated for public participation that are not expended at the close of any biennium revert to the model toxics control operating account.

(5) The department must adopt rules for grant or loan issuance and performance.

(6) During the 2023-2025 and 2025-2027 fiscal biennia, the legislature may direct the state treasurer to make transfers of moneys in the model toxics control operating account to the state general

fund. [2025 c 424 s 977; 2023 c 475 s 940; 2021 c 334 s 988; 2020 c 20 s 1319; 2019 c 422 s 202. Formerly RCW 70.105D.190.]

**Effective date—2025 c 424:** See note following RCW 9.46.100.

**Effective date—2023 c 475:** See note following RCW 16.76.030.

**Conflict with federal requirements—Effective date—2021 c 334:**  
See notes following RCW 43.79.555.

**Effective date—Intent—2019 c 422:** See notes following RCW 82.21.010.

**RCW 70A.305.190 Model toxics control capital account.** (1) The model toxics control capital account is hereby created in the state treasury.

(2) In addition to the funds deposited into the model toxics control capital account required under RCW 82.21.030, the following moneys must be deposited into the model toxics control capital account:

- (a) The costs of remedial actions recovered under this chapter, except as provided under RCW 70A.305.170(7);
- (b) Penalties collected or recovered under this chapter; and
- (c) Any other money appropriated or transferred to the account by the legislature.

(3) Moneys in the model toxics control capital account must be used for the improvement, rehabilitation, remediation, and cleanup of toxic sites and other capital-related expenditures for programs and activities identified in subsection (4) of this section.

(4) Moneys in the model toxics control capital account may be used only for capital projects and activities that carry out the purposes of this chapter and for financial assistance to local governments or other persons to carry out those projects or activities, including but not limited to the following, generally in descending order of priority:

(a) Remedial actions, including the following generally in descending order of priority:

(i) Extended grant agreements entered into under subsection (5)(a) of this section;

(ii) Grants or loans to local governments for remedial actions, including planning for adaptive reuse of properties as provided for under subsection (5)(d) of this section. The department must prioritize funding of remedial actions at:

(A) Facilities on the department's hazardous sites list with a high hazard ranking for which there is an approved remedial action work plan or an equivalent document under federal cleanup law;

(B) Brownfield properties within a redevelopment opportunity zone if the local government is a prospective purchaser of the property and there is a department-approved remedial action work plan or equivalent document under the federal cleanup law;

(iii) Department-conducted remedial actions;

(iv) Grants to persons intending to remediate contaminated real property for development of affordable housing;

(v) Public funding to assist potentially liable persons to pay for the costs of remedial action in compliance with clean-up standards under RCW 70A.305.030(2)(e) if:

(A) The amount and terms of the funding are established under a settlement agreement under RCW 70A.305.040(4); and

(B) The director has found that the funding will achieve both a substantially more expeditious or enhanced cleanup than would otherwise occur, and the prevention or mitigation of unfair economic hardship;

(vi) Public funding to assist prospective purchasers to pay for the costs of remedial action in compliance with clean-up standards under RCW 70A.305.030(2)(e) if:

(A) The facility is located within a redevelopment opportunity zone designated under RCW 70A.305.150;

(B) The amount and terms of the funding are established under a settlement agreement under RCW 70A.305.040(5); and

(C) The director has found the funding will achieve a substantially more expeditious or enhanced cleanup than would otherwise occur, provide a public benefit in addition to cleanup commensurate with the scope of the public funding; and meet any additional criteria established in rule by the department; and

(vii) To expedite multiparty clean-up efforts, purchase of remedial action cost-cap insurance;

(b) Grants, or loans, or contracts to local governments for solid waste plans and programs under chapters 70A.205, 70A.214, 70A.224, 70A.222, 70A.230, and 70A.300 RCW. Funds must be allocated consistent with priorities and matching requirements in the respective chapters;

(c) Toxic air pollutant reduction programs, including grants or loans to local governments for woodstoves and diesel;

(d) Grants, loans, or contracts to local governments for hazardous waste plans and programs under chapters 70A.405 and 70A.300 RCW, including chemical action plan implementation. Funds must be allocated consistent with priorities and matching requirements in the respective chapters; and

(e) Petroleum-based plastic or expanded polystyrene foam debris clean-up activities in fresh or marine waters.

(5) The department may establish and administer a program to provide grants and loans to local governments for remedial actions, including planning for adaptive reuse of contaminated properties. To expedite cleanups throughout the state, the department may use the following strategies when providing grants to local governments under this subsection:

(a) Enter into an extended grant agreement with a local government conducting remedial actions at a facility where those actions extend over multiple biennia and the total eligible cost of those actions exceeds \$20,000,000. The agreement is subject to the following limitations:

(i) The initial duration of such an agreement may not exceed 10 years. The department may extend the duration of such an agreement upon finding substantial progress has been made on remedial actions at the facility;

(ii) Extended grant agreements may not exceed 50 percent of the total eligible remedial action costs at the facility; and

(iii) The department may not allocate future funding to an extended grant agreement unless the local government has demonstrated to the department that funds awarded under the agreement during the

previous biennium have been substantially expended or contracts have been entered into to substantially expend the funds;

(b) Enter into a grant agreement with a local government conducting a remedial action that provides for periodic reimbursement of remedial action costs as they are incurred as established in the agreement;

(c) Enter into a grant agreement with a local government prior to it acquiring a property or obtaining necessary access to conduct remedial actions, provided the agreement is conditioned upon the local government acquiring the property or obtaining the access in accordance with a schedule specified in the agreement;

(d) Provide integrated planning grants to local governments to fund studies necessary to facilitate remedial actions at brownfield properties and adaptive reuse of properties following remediation. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to: Environmental site assessments; remedial investigations; health assessments; feasibility studies; site planning; community involvement; land use and regulatory analyses; building and infrastructure assessments; economic and fiscal analyses; and any environmental analyses under chapter 43.21C RCW;

(e) Provide grants to local governments for remedial actions related to area-wide groundwater contamination. To receive the funding, the local government does not need to be a potentially liable person or be required to seek reimbursement of grant funds from a potentially liable person;

(f) The director may alter grant matching requirements to create incentives for local governments to expedite cleanups when one of the following conditions exists:

(i) Funding would prevent or mitigate unfair economic hardship imposed by the clean-up liability;

(ii) Funding would create new substantial economic development, public recreational opportunities, or habitat restoration opportunities that would not otherwise occur; or

(iii) Funding would create an opportunity for acquisition and redevelopment of brownfield property under RCW 70A.305.040(5) that would not otherwise occur; and

(g) When pending grant applications under subsection (4)(d) and (e) of this section exceed the amount of funds available, designated redevelopment opportunity zones must receive priority for distribution of available funds.

(6) Except for unanticipated receipts under RCW 43.79.260 through 43.79.282, moneys in model toxics control capital account may be spent only after appropriation by statute.

(7) The legislature finds that, in 2023, wildfires in Spokane and Pend Oreille counties resulted in a loss of approximately 366 homes as well as secondary buildings. The burning of these structures has resulted in a large toxic debris field containing asbestos, heavy metals, plastics, and fuel which are at risk of leaching into the soil and groundwater. During the 2023-2025 and 2025-2027 fiscal biennia, moneys in the model toxics control capital account may be used for financial assistance to local governments for the testing of hazardous materials, removal of debris, and remediation of soil necessary to support the rebuilding of communities impacted by these wildfires.

(8) During the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium, the legislature may direct the state treasurer to make transfers of moneys in the model toxics control capital account to the state general fund. [2025 c 424

s 978; 2025 c 414 s 8049; 2024 c 375 s 8009; 2022 c 102 s 2; 2020 c 20 s 1320; 2019 c 422 s 203. Formerly RCW 70.105D.200.]

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 2025 c 414 s 8049 and by 2025 c 424 s 978, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Effective date—2025 c 424:** See note following RCW 9.46.100.

**Effective date—2025 c 414:** See note following RCW 79A.25.210.

**Effective date—2024 c 375:** See note following RCW 70A.65.305.

**Findings—2022 c 102:** "The legislature finds that:

(1) Remedial action grants are an effective means to assist a local government achieve toxic waste cleanup; and

(2) Requiring a local government to have all the necessary permits in hand prior to receiving remedial action grant funding has caused unintended delays in implementing projects." [2022 c 102 s 1.]

**Effective date—Intent—2019 c 422:** See notes following RCW 82.21.010.

**RCW 70A.305.200 Model toxics control stormwater account.** (1) The model toxics control stormwater account is hereby created in the state treasury.

(2) Moneys in the model toxics control stormwater account must be used for operating and capital programs, activities, and projects identified in subsection (3) of this section directly relating to stormwater pollution control.

(3) Moneys in the model toxics control stormwater account must be used only to carry out the operating and capital programs, activities, and projects directly relating to stormwater activities under RCW 70A.305.180 and 70A.305.190, including but not limited to the following:

(a) Stormwater pollution control projects and activities that protect or preserve existing remedial actions or prevent hazardous clean-up sites;

(b) Stormwater financial assistance to local governments that assist in compliance to the purposes of this chapter.

(4) Except for unanticipated receipts under RCW 43.79.260 through 43.79.282, moneys in the model toxics control stormwater account may be spent only after appropriation by statute. [2020 c 20 s 1321; 2019 c 422 s 204. Formerly RCW 70.105D.210.]

**Effective date—Intent—2019 c 422:** See notes following RCW 82.21.010.

**RCW 70A.305.900 Short title—1989 c 2.** This act shall be known as "the model toxics control act." [1989 c 2 s 22 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.900.]

**RCW 70A.305.901 Captions—1989 c 2.** As used in this act, captions constitute no part of the law. [1989 c 2 s 21 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.905.]

**RCW 70A.305.902 Construction—1989 c 2.** The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the policies and purposes of this act. In the event of conflict between the provisions of this act and any other act, the provisions of this act shall govern. [1989 c 2 s 19 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.910.]

**RCW 70A.305.903 Existing agreements—1989 c 2.** The consent orders and decrees in effect on March 1, 1989, shall remain valid and binding. [1989 c 2 s 20 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.915.]

**RCW 70A.305.904 Effective date—1989 c 2.** (1) Sections 1 through 24 of this act shall take effect March 1, 1989, except that the director of ecology and the director of revenue may take whatever actions may be necessary to ensure that sections 1 through 24 of this act are implemented on their effective date.

\* (2) This section does not apply and shall have no force or effect if (a) this act is passed by the legislature in the 1988 regular session or (b) no bill is enacted by the legislature involving hazardous substance cleanup (along with any other subject matter) between August 15, 1987, and January 1, 1988. [1989 c 2 s 26 (Initiative Measure No. 97, approved November 8, 1988). Formerly RCW 70.105D.920.]

**\*Reviser's note:** Neither condition contained in subsection (2) was met.