

Chapter 70A.45 RCW
LIMITING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

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RCW 70A.45.005 Findings—Intent. (1) The legislature finds that Washington has long been a national and international leader on energy conservation and environmental stewardship, including air quality protection, renewable energy development and generation, emission standards for fossil-fuel based energy generation, energy efficiency programs, natural resource conservation, sustainable forestry and the production of forest products, vehicle emission standards, and the use of biofuels. Washington is also unique among most states in that in addition to its commitment to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, it has established goals to grow the clean energy sector and reduce the state's expenditures on imported fuels.

(2) The legislature further finds that Washington should continue its leadership on climate change policy by creating accountability for achieving the emission reductions established in RCW 70A.45.020, participating in the design of a regional multisector market-based system to help achieve those emission reductions, assessing other market strategies to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, maintaining and enhancing the state's ability to continue to sequester carbon through natural and working lands and forest products, and ensuring the state has a well-trained workforce for our clean energy future. The consistent tracking and annual reporting of statewide emissions in a greenhouse gas inventory as required under RCW 70A.45.020 is an important responsibility that allows the legislature to determine whether state emissions are on a trajectory to achieve statutory emissions reduction limits, or whether new or amended policy interventions are necessary to achieve those limits.

(3) It is the intent of the legislature that the state will: (a) Limit and reduce emissions of greenhouse gas consistent with the emission reductions established in RCW 70A.45.020; (b) minimize the potential to export pollution, jobs, and economic opportunities; (c) support industry sectors that can act as sequesterers of carbon; and (d) reduce emissions at the lowest cost to Washington's economy, consumers, and businesses.

(4) In the event the state elects to participate in a regional multisector market-based system, it is the intent of the legislature that the system will become effective by January 1, 2012, after authority is provided to the department for its implementation. By acting now, Washington businesses and citizens will have adequate time and opportunities to be well positioned to take advantage of the low carbon economy and to make necessary investments in low carbon technology.

(5) It is also the intent of the legislature that the regional multisector market-based system recognize Washington's unique emissions and sequestration portfolio, including the:

(a) State's hydroelectric system;

(b) Opportunities presented by Washington's abundant forest resources and the associated forest products industry, along with aquatic and agriculture land and the associated industries; and

(c) State's leadership in energy efficiency and the actions it has already taken that have reduced its generation of greenhouse gas emissions and that entities receive appropriate credit for early actions to reduce greenhouse gases.

(6) If any revenues, excluding those from state trust lands, that accrue to the state are created by a market system, they must be used for the purposes established in chapter 70A.65 RCW and to further the state's efforts to achieve the goals established in RCW 70A.45.020, address the impacts of global warming on affected habitats, species, and communities, promote and invest in industry sectors that act as sequesterers of carbon, and increase investment in the clean energy economy particularly for communities and workers that have suffered from heavy job losses and chronic unemployment and underemployment. [2025 c 195 s 1; 2021 c 316 s 44. Prior: 2020 c 120 s 2; 2020 c 20 s 1397; 2008 c 14 s 1. Formerly RCW 70.235.005.]

Short title—2021 c 316: See RCW 70A.65.900.

Findings—2020 c 120: "(1) The legislature finds that the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) released a report in 2019 entitled "IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems" that provides guidance relating to how natural and working lands can be utilized to assist with a global climate response strategy. In addition, the food and agricultural organization of the United Nations issued a report in 2016 entitled "forestry for a low carbon future" with specific recommendations for integrating forest and wood products in climate change strategies. Recommendations from these reports are critical as Washington develops its own climate response and charts how the state can use its forestland base and vibrant forest products sector as part of its contribution to the global climate response.

(2) The legislature further finds that the 2019 intergovernmental panel on climate change report identifies several measures where

sustainable forest management and forest products may be utilized to maintain and enhance carbon sequestration. These include increasing the carbon sequestration potential of forests and forest products by maintaining and expanding the forestland base, reducing emissions from land conversion to nonforest uses, increasing forest resiliency to reduce the risk of carbon releases from disturbances such as wildfire, pest infestation, and disease, and applying sustainable forest management techniques to maintain or enhance forest carbon stocks and forest carbon sinks, including through the transference of carbon to wood products.

(3) The legislature further finds that the food and agricultural organization of the United Nations reports similar recommendations, with a focus on forest management tools that increases the carbon density in forests, increases carbon storage out of the forest in harvested wood products, utilizes wood energy, and suppresses forest disturbances from fire, pests, and disease." [2020 c 120 s 1.]

RCW 70A.45.010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Carbon dioxide equivalents" means a metric measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases based upon their global warming potential.

(2) "Carbon sequestration" means the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide through biologic, chemical, geologic, or physical processes.

(3) "Climate advisory team" means the stakeholder group formed in response to executive order 07-02.

(4) "Climate impacts group" means the University of Washington's climate impacts group.

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

(6) "Director" means the director of the department.

(7) "Greenhouse gas" and "greenhouse gases" includes carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and any other gas or gases designated by the department by rule.

(8) "Person" means an individual, partnership, franchise holder, association, corporation, a state, a city, a county, or any subdivision or instrumentality of the state.

(9) "Program" means the department's climate change program.

(10) "Western climate initiative" means the collaboration of states, Canadian provinces, Mexican states, and tribes to design a multisector market-based mechanism as directed under the western regional climate action initiative signed by the governor on February 22, 2007. [2021 c 315 s 3. Prior: 2020 c 79 s 5; prior: 2019 c 284 s 2; 2010 c 146 s 1; 2008 c 14 s 2. Formerly RCW 70.235.010.]

Intent—2020 c 79: See note following RCW 70A.45.020.

Finding—Intent—2019 c 284: See note following RCW 70A.60.060.

RCW 70A.45.020 Greenhouse gas emissions reductions—Reporting requirements. (1)(a) The state shall limit anthropogenic emissions of

greenhouse gases to achieve the following emission reductions for Washington state:

- (i) By 2020, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 1990 levels, or 90,500,000 metric tons;
- (ii) By 2030, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 50,000,000 metric tons, or 45 percent below 1990 levels;
- (iii) By 2040, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 27,000,000 metric tons, or 70 percent below 1990 levels;
- (iv) By 2050, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 5,000,000 metric tons, or 95 percent below 1990 levels.

(b) By December 1, 2008, the department shall submit a greenhouse gas reduction plan for review and approval to the legislature, describing those actions necessary to achieve the emission reductions in (a) of this subsection by using existing statutory authority and any additional authority granted by the legislature. Actions taken using existing statutory authority may proceed prior to approval of the greenhouse gas reduction plan.

(c) In addition to the emissions limits specified in (a) of this subsection, the state shall also achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Except where explicitly stated otherwise, nothing in chapter 14, Laws of 2008 limits any state agency authorities as they existed prior to June 12, 2008.

(d) Consistent with this directive, the department shall take the following actions:

- (i) Develop and implement a system for monitoring and reporting emissions of greenhouse gases as required under RCW 70A.15.2200; and
- (ii) Track progress toward meeting the emission reductions established in this subsection, including the results from policies currently in effect that have been previously adopted by the state and policies adopted in the future, and report on that progress. Progress reporting should include statewide emissions as well as emissions from key sectors of the economy including, but not limited to, electricity, transportation, buildings, manufacturing, and agriculture.

(e) Nothing in this section creates any new or additional regulatory authority for any state agency as they existed prior to January 1, 2019.

(2)(a) The department and the department of commerce shall post and maintain on the department's website and report to the governor and the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives the total emissions of greenhouse gases for the most recent two years for which such data are available, and totals in each major source sector, including emissions associated with leaked gas identified by the utilities and transportation commission under RCW 81.88.160. The report must include greenhouse gas emissions from wildfires, developed in consultation with the department of natural resources. The department shall ensure the reporting rules adopted under RCW 70A.15.2200 allow it to develop a comprehensive inventory of emissions of greenhouse gases from all significant sectors of the Washington economy. The report required under this section must be completed by December 31st of each even-numbered year through 2030, and must be completed by December 31st of each year beginning December 31, 2031.

(b) In addition to the report required in (a) of this subsection, by December 31, 2027, and December 31, 2029, the department and the department of commerce shall post and maintain on the department's website and provide notification to the governor and the appropriate committees of the senate and the house of representatives summarizing

the total emissions of greenhouse gases for the most recent year for which such data is available, and totals in each major source sector reported as required under (a) of this subsection.

(3) Except for purposes of reporting, emissions of carbon dioxide from industrial combustion of biomass in the form of fuel wood, wood waste, wood by-products, and wood residuals shall not be considered a greenhouse gas as long as the region's silvicultural sequestration capacity is maintained or increased. [2025 c 195 s 2. Prior: 2020 c 79 s 2; 2020 c 32 s 4; 2020 c 20 s 1398; 2008 c 14 s 3. Formerly RCW 70.235.020.]

Intent—2020 c 79: "(1) Global climate change represents an existential threat to the livelihoods, health, and well-being of all Washingtonians. Our state is experiencing a climate emergency in the form of devastating wildfires, drought, lack of snowpack, and increases in ocean acidification caused in part by climate change.

(2) These threats are not distributed evenly across the state. In particular, rural communities with natural resource-based economies, tribes, and communities of lower and moderate incomes will be disproportionately exposed to health and economic impacts driven by climate change.

(3) The longer we delay in taking definitive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the greater the threat posed by climate change to current and future generations, and the more costly it will be to protect and maintain our communities against the impacts of climate change. Unchecked, climate change will bring ever more drastic decline to the health and prosperity of future generations, particularly for the most vulnerable communities.

(4) According to the climate impacts group at the University of Washington, with global warming of at least one and one-half degrees Celsius, by 2050 Washington is projected to experience:

(a) An increase of sixty-seven percent in the number of days per year above ninety degrees Fahrenheit, relative to 1976-2005, leading to an increased risk of heat-related illness and death, warmer streams, and more frequent algal blooms;

(b) A decrease of thirty-eight percent in the state's snowpack, relative to 1970-1999, leading to reduced water storage, irrigation shortages, and winter and summer recreation losses;

(c) An increase of sixteen percent in winter streamflow, relative to 1970-1999, leading to an increased risk of river flooding;

(d) A decrease of twenty-three percent in summer streamflow, relative to 1970-1999, leading to reduced summer hydropower, conflicts over water resources, and negative effects on salmon populations; and

(e) An increase of one and four-tenths feet in sea level, relative to 1991-2010, leading to coastal flooding and inundation, damage to coastal infrastructure, and bluff erosion.

(5) The legislature has taken steps to understand and address the threats posed by climate change as climate change science has continued to evolve. In 2008 with the passage of Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 2815, *chapter 70.235 RCW, the legislature acknowledged Washington's history of national and international leadership in clean energy, and set limits on the greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change.

(6) *Chapter 70.235 RCW recognizes that the state of climate change science will continue to evolve, and so it directs the department of ecology to consult with the climate impacts group at the

University of Washington for the purpose of issuing periodic reports that summarize the current climate change science and that make recommendations regarding whether the state's greenhouse gas emissions reductions need to be updated. As required by *chapter 70.235 RCW, the department of ecology prepared and submitted reviews of current climate change science and the state of global warming trends in both December 2016, Ecology Publication No. 16-01-010, and again in December 2019, Ecology Publication No. 19-02-031. The most recent report underscores the need for Washington to take immediate and aggressive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the primary cause of global climate change.

(7) Based on the current science and emissions trends, as reported by the department of ecology and the climate impacts group at the University of Washington, the legislature finds that avoiding global warming of at least one and one-half degrees Celsius is possible only if global greenhouse gas emissions start to decline precipitously, and as soon as possible. Restoring a safe and stable climate will require mobilization across all levels of government and economic sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, and energy production, to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Washington must therefore further strengthen its emissions reduction targets for 2030 and beyond. In addition, all pathways to one and one-half degrees Celsius rely on some amount of negative emissions through carbon sequestration. It is therefore the intent of the legislature to strengthen Washington's statutory greenhouse gas emission limits to reflect current science and to align with the limits that other jurisdictions are setting to combat climate change and to encourage voluntary actions that increase carbon sequestration on natural and working lands and storage in the related products from those lands.

(8) In strengthening Washington's statutory greenhouse gas emission limits, it is the intent of the legislature to pursue these limits in a way that:

(a) Reduces the burdens and creates benefits for vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities with long-term and short-term outcomes for public health, economic well-being, local environments, and community resiliency that benefits all Washington residents;

(b) Supports the current skilled and trained construction workforce, retains and creates other high quality employment opportunities, and generates broad, widely shared economic benefits for the state and Washington residents; and

(c) Maintains Washington's manufacturing economy and avoids leakage of emissions to other jurisdictions." [2020 c 79 s 1.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 70.235 RCW was recodified as chapter 70A.45 RCW by 2020 c 20 s 2052.

Intent—2020 c 32: See note following RCW 80.28.420.

RCW 70A.45.030 Development of a design for a regional multisector market-based system to limit and reduce emissions of greenhouse gas—Information required to be submitted to the legislature. (1)(a) The director shall develop, in coordination with the western climate initiative, a design for a regional multisector market-based system to limit and reduce emissions of greenhouse gas

consistent with the emission reductions established in RCW 70A.45.020(1).

(b) By December 1, 2008, the director and the director of the department of commerce shall deliver to the legislature specific recommendations for approval and request for authority to implement the preferred design of a regional multisector market-based system in (a) of this subsection. These recommendations must include:

(i) Proposed legislation, necessary funding, and the schedule necessary to implement the preferred design by January 1, 2012;

(ii) Any changes determined necessary to the reporting requirements established under RCW 70A.15.2200; and

(iii) Actions that the state should take to prevent manipulation of the multisector market-based system designed under this section.

(2) In developing the design for the regional multisector market-based system under subsection (1) of this section, the department shall consult with the affected state agencies, and provide opportunity for public review and comment.

(3) In addition to the information required under subsection (1)(b) of this section, the director and the director of the department of commerce shall submit the following to the legislature by December 1, 2008:

(a) Information on progress to date in achieving the requirements of chapter 14, Laws of 2008;

(b) The final recommendations of the climate advisory team, including recommended most promising actions to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases or otherwise respond to climate change. These recommendations must include strategies to reduce the quantity of emissions of greenhouse gases per distance traveled in the transportation sector;

(c) A request for additional resources and statutory authority needed to limit and reduce emissions of greenhouse gas consistent with chapter 14, Laws of 2008 including implementation of the most promising recommendations of the climate advisory team;

(d) Recommendations on how projects funded by the green energy incentive account in *RCW 43.325.040 may be used to expand the electrical transmission infrastructure into urban and rural areas of the state for purposes of allowing the recharging of plug-in hybrid electric vehicles;

(e) Recommendations on how local governments could participate in the multisector market-based system designed under subsection (1) of this section;

(f) Recommendations regarding the circumstances under which generation of electricity or alternative fuel from landfill gas and gas from anaerobic digesters may receive an offset or credit in the regional multisector market-based system or other strategies developed by the department; and

(g) Recommendations developed in consultation with the department of natural resources and the department of agriculture with the climate advisory team, the college of forest resources at the University of Washington, and the Washington State University, and a nonprofit consortium involved in research on renewable industrial materials, regarding how forestry and agricultural lands and practices may participate voluntarily as an offset or other credit program in the regional multisector market-based system. The recommendations must ensure that the baseline for this offset or credit program does not disadvantage this state in relation to another state or states. These recommendations shall address:

- (i) Commercial and other working forests, including accounting for site-class specific forest management practices;
- (ii) Agricultural and forest products, including accounting for substitution of wood for fossil intensive substitutes;
- (iii) Agricultural land and practices;
- (iv) Forest and agricultural lands set aside or managed for conservation as of, or after, June 12, 2008; and
- (v) Reforestation and afforestation projects. [2020 c 20 s 1399; 2008 c 14 s 4. Formerly RCW 70.235.030.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 43.325.040 expired June 30, 2016.

RCW 70A.45.040 Consultation with climate impacts group at the University of Washington—Report to the legislature. Within eighteen months of the next and each successive global or national assessment of climate change science, the department shall consult with the climate impacts group at the University of Washington regarding the science on human-caused climate change and provide a report to the legislature summarizing that science and make recommendations regarding whether the greenhouse gas emissions reductions required under RCW 70A.45.020 need to be updated. [2020 c 20 s 1400; 2008 c 14 s 7. Formerly RCW 70.235.040.]

RCW 70A.45.050 Greenhouse gas emission limits for state agencies—Timeline—Reports—Strategy—Reports to the legislature. (1) State agencies shall meet the statewide greenhouse gas emission limits established in RCW 70A.45.020 to achieve the following, using the estimates and strategy established in subsections (2) and (3) of this section:

(a) By July 1, 2020, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to eight hundred five thousand metric tons, or fifteen percent below 2005 emission levels;

(b) By 2030, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to five hundred twenty-one thousand metric tons, or forty-five percent below 2005 levels;

(c) By 2040, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to two hundred eighty-four thousand metric tons, or seventy percent below 2005 levels; and

(d) By 2050, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases to forty-seven thousand metric tons, or ninety-five percent below 2005 levels and achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by state government as a whole.

(2)(a) By June 30, 2010, state agencies shall report estimates of emissions for 2005 to the department, including 2009 levels of emissions, and projected emissions through 2035.

(b) State agencies required to report under RCW 70A.15.2200 must estimate emissions from methodologies recommended by the department and must be based on actual operation of those agencies. Agencies not required to report under RCW 70A.15.2200 shall derive emissions estimates using an emissions calculator provided by the department.

(3) By June 1st of each even-numbered year beginning in 2022, state agencies shall report to the department, and to the state efficiency and environmental performance office at the department of commerce, the actions planned for the next two biennia to meet emission reduction targets and the actions taken to meet the emission

reduction targets established in this section. The report must also include the agency's long-term strategy for meeting the emission reduction targets established in this section, which the agency shall update as appropriate. The department and the state efficiency and environmental performance office at the department of commerce shall review and compile the agency reports and, by December 1st of each even-numbered year beginning in 2022, provide a consolidated report to the appropriate committees of the legislature. This report must include recommendations for budgetary and other actions that will assist state agencies in achieving the greenhouse gas emissions reductions specified in this section. The department may authorize the department of enterprise services to report on behalf of any state agency having fewer than five hundred full-time equivalent employees at any time during the reporting period. The department shall cooperate with the department of enterprise services and the state efficiency and environmental performance office at the department of commerce to develop consolidated reporting methodologies that incorporate emission reduction actions taken across all or substantially all state agencies.

(4) State agencies shall cooperate in providing information to the department, the department of enterprise services, and the department of commerce for the purposes of this section. [2020 c 79 s 3; 2020 c 20 s 1401; 2015 c 225 s 110; 2009 c 519 s 2. Formerly RCW 70.235.050.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2020 c 20 s 1401 and by 2020 c 79 s 3, 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).

Intent—2020 c 79: See note following RCW 70A.45.020.

Findings—2009 c 519: See RCW 70A.05.900.

RCW 70A.45.060 Emissions calculator for estimating aggregate emissions—Reports. (1) The department shall develop an emissions calculator to assist state agencies in estimating aggregate emissions as well as in estimating the relative emissions from different ways in carrying out activities.

(2) The department may use data such as totals of building space occupied, energy purchases and generation, motor vehicle fuel purchases and total mileage driven, and other reasonable sources of data to make these estimates. The estimates may be derived from a single methodology using these or other factors, except that for the top ten state agencies in occupied building space and vehicle miles driven, the estimates must be based upon the actual and projected operations of those agencies. The estimates may be adjusted, and reasonable estimates derived, when agencies have been created since 1990 or functions reorganized among state agencies since 1990. The estimates may incorporate projected emissions reductions that also affect state agencies under the program authorized in RCW 70A.45.020 and other existing policies that will result in emissions reductions.

(3) By December 31st of each even-numbered year beginning in 2010, the department shall report to the governor and to the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives the total state agencies' emissions of greenhouse gases for 2005 and the

preceding two years and actions taken to meet the emissions reduction targets. [2020 c 20 s 1402; 2009 c 519 s 5. Formerly RCW 70.235.060.]

Findings—2009 c 519: See RCW 70A.05.900.

RCW 70A.45.070 Distribution of funds for infrastructure and capital development projects—Prerequisites. Beginning in 2010, when distributing capital funds through competitive programs for infrastructure and economic development projects, all state agencies must consider whether the entity receiving the funds has adopted policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Agencies also must consider whether the project is consistent with:

(1) The state's limits on the emissions of greenhouse gases established in RCW 70A.45.020;

(2) Statewide goals to reduce annual per capita vehicle miles traveled by 2050, in accordance with RCW 47.01.440, except that the agency shall consider whether project locations in rural counties, as defined in RCW 43.160.020, will maximize the reduction of vehicle miles traveled; and

(3) Applicable federal emissions reduction requirements. [2020 c 20 s 1403; 2009 c 519 s 9. Formerly RCW 70.235.070.]

Findings—2009 c 519: See RCW 70A.05.900.

RCW 70A.45.090 Forests and forest products sector—Climate response. (1)(a) Washington's existing forest products sector, including public and private working forests and the harvesting, transportation, and manufacturing sectors that enable working forests to remain on the land and the state to be a global supplier of forest products, is, according to a University of Washington study analyzing the global warming mitigating role of wood products from Washington's private forests, an industrial sector that currently operates as a significant net sequesterer of carbon. This value, which is only provided through the maintenance of an intact and synergistic industrial sector, is an integral component of the state's contribution to the global climate response and efforts to mitigate carbon emissions.

(b) Satisfying the goals set forth in RCW 70A.45.020 requires supporting, throughout all of state government, consistent with other laws and mandates of the state, the economic vitality of the sustainable forest products sector and other business sectors capable of sequestering and storing carbon. This includes support for working forests of all sizes, ownerships, and management objectives, and the necessary manufacturing sectors that support the transformation of stored carbon into long-lived forest products while maintaining and enhancing the carbon mitigation benefits of the forest sector, sustaining rural communities, and providing for fish, wildlife, and clean water, as provided in chapter 76.09 RCW. Support for the forest sector also ensures the state's public and private working forests avoid catastrophic wildfire and other similar disturbances and avoid conversion in the face of unprecedented conversion pressures.

(c) It is the policy of the state to support the contributions of all working forests and the synergistic forest products sector to the state's climate response. This includes landowners, mills, bioenergy,

pulp and paper, and the related harvesting and transportation infrastructure that is necessary for forestland owners to continue the rotational cycle of carbon capture and sequestration in growing trees and allows forest products manufacturers to store the captured carbon in wood products and maintain and enhance the forest sector's role in mitigating a significant percentage of the state's carbon emissions while providing other environmental and social benefits and supporting a strong rural economic base. It is further the policy of the state to support the participation of working forests in current and future carbon markets, strengthening the state's role as a valuable contributor to the global carbon response while supporting one of its largest manufacturing sectors.

(d) It is further the policy of the state to utilize carbon accounting land use, land use change, and forestry reporting principles consistent with established reporting guidelines, such as those used by the intergovernmental panel on climate change and the United States national greenhouse gas reporting inventories.

(2) Any state carbon programs must support the policies stated in this section and recognize the forest products industry's contribution to the state's climate response. [2021 c 65 s 70; 2020 c 120 s 3.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.

Findings—2020 c 120: See note following RCW 70A.45.005.

RCW 70A.45.100 Carbon sequestration. (1) Separate and apart from the emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.020, it is the policy of the state to promote the removal of excess carbon from the atmosphere through voluntary and incentive-based sequestration activities in Washington including, but not limited to, on natural and working lands and by recognizing the potential for sequestration in products and product supply chains. It is the policy of the state to prioritize carbon sequestration in amounts necessary to achieve the carbon neutrality goal established in RCW 70A.45.020, and at a level consistent with pathways to limit global warming to one and one-half degrees.

(2) (a) All agencies of state government including, but not limited to, the department, the department of natural resources, the department of transportation, the department of fish and wildlife, the department of agriculture, the department of commerce, the recreation and conservation office, and the conservation commission, shall seek all practicable opportunities, consistent with existing legal mandates and requirements and statutory objectives, to cost-effectively maximize carbon sequestration and carbon storage in their nonland management agency operations, contracting, and grant-making activities.

(b) Any such effort to promote carbon sequestration activities that affects support for, or management of private lands or trust lands managed by the department of natural resources must be done in cooperation with the owners and managers of those natural and working lands. [2021 c 65 s 71; 2020 c 79 s 4.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.

Intent—2020 c 79: See note following RCW 70A.45.020.

RCW 70A.45.110 Siting of certain facilities. The state, state agencies, and political subdivisions of the state, in implementing their duties and authorities established under other laws, may only consider the greenhouse gas limits established in RCW 70A.45.020 in a manner that recognizes, where applicable, that the siting and placement of new or expanded best-in-class facilities with lower carbon emitting processes is in the economic and environmental interests of the state of Washington. [2021 c 316 s 36.]

Short title—2021 c 316: See RCW 70A.65.900.

RCW 70A.45.120 Local government comprehensive plans—Housing capacity and emissions reduction—Department guidelines. (1) The department of commerce, in consultation with the department of ecology, the department of health, and the department of transportation, shall publish guidelines that specify a set of measures counties and cities may implement via updates to their comprehensive plans and development regulations that have a demonstrated ability to increase housing capacity within urban growth areas or reduce greenhouse gas emissions, allowing for consideration of the emissions reductions achieved through the adoption of statewide programs. The guidelines must prioritize measures that benefit overburdened communities, including communities that have experienced disproportionate harm due to air pollution and may draw upon the most recent health disparities data from the department of health to identify high pollution areas and disproportionately burdened communities. These guidelines must be developed consistent with an environmental justice assessment pursuant to RCW 70A.02.060 and the guidelines must include environmental justice assessment processes. The guidelines must be based on:

(a) The most recent greenhouse gas emissions report prepared by the department of ecology and the department of commerce pursuant to RCW 70A.45.020(2);

(b) The most recent city and county population estimates prepared by the office of financial management pursuant to RCW 43.62.035;

(c) The locations of major employment centers and transit corridors, for the purpose of increasing housing supply in these areas; and

(d) Available environmental justice data and data regarding access to public transportation for people with disabilities and for vulnerable populations.

(2)(a) The department of commerce, in consultation with the department of transportation, shall publish guidelines that specify a set of measures counties and cities may have available to them to take through updates to their comprehensive plans and development regulations that have a demonstrated ability to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled, including measures that are designed to be achievable throughout the state, including in small cities and rural cities.

(b) The guidelines must be based on:

(i) The most recent greenhouse gas emissions report prepared by the department of ecology and the department of commerce pursuant to RCW 70A.45.020(2);

(ii) The most recent city and county population estimates prepared by the office of financial management pursuant to RCW 43.62.035; and

(iii) The most recent summary of per capita vehicle miles traveled as compiled by the department of transportation.

(3) The department of commerce shall first publish the full set of guidelines described in subsections (1) and (2) of this section no later than December 31, 2025. The department of commerce shall update these guidelines at least every five years thereafter based on the most recently available data, and shall provide for a process for local governments and other parties to submit alternative actions for consideration for inclusion into the guidelines at least once per year. The department of commerce shall publish an intermediate set of guidelines no later than December 31, 2023, in order to be available for use by jurisdictions whose periodic updates are required by RCW 36.70A.130(5) to occur prior to December 31, 2025. Jurisdictions whose periodic updates are required by RCW 36.70A.130(5)(b) may utilize the intermediate set of guidelines published by the department of commerce to meet the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(9).

(4)(a) In any updates to the guidelines published after 2025, the department of commerce shall include an evaluation of the impact that locally adopted climate change and resiliency elements have had on local greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled reduction goals. The evaluation must also address the impact that locally adopted greenhouse gas emissions reduction subelements have had on meeting local housing goals and targets.

(b) The updates must also include an estimate of the impacts that locally adopted climate change and resiliency elements will have on achieving local greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled reduction goals. The evaluation must also include an estimate of the impact that locally adopted greenhouse gas emissions reduction subelements will have on meeting local housing goals and targets.

(c) The department may include in the specified guidelines what additional measures cities and counties should take to make additional progress on local reduction goals, including any measures that increase housing capacity within urban growth areas.

(5) The department of commerce may not propose or adopt any guidelines that would include any form of a road usage charge or any fees or surcharges related to vehicle miles traveled.

(6) The department of commerce may not propose or adopt any guidelines that would direct or require local governments to regulate or tax, in any form, transportation service providers, delivery vehicles, or passenger vehicles.

(7) The department of commerce, in the course of implementing this section, shall provide and prioritize options that support increased housing supply and diversity of housing types that assist counties and cities in meeting greenhouse gas emissions reduction, housing supply, and other requirements established under this chapter.

(8) The provisions of this section as applied to the department of transportation are subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose.

(9) For purposes of this section, "overburdened communities" and "vulnerable populations" means the same as provided in RCW 36.70A.030. [2023 c 228 s 5.]

RCW 70A.45.900 Scope of chapter 14, Laws of 2008. Except where explicitly stated otherwise, nothing in chapter 14, Laws of 2008 alters or limits any authorities of the department as they existed prior to June 12, 2008. [2008 c 14 s 11. Formerly RCW 70.235.900.]