

RCW 34.05.310 Prenotice inquiry—Negotiated and pilot rules.

(1) (a) To meet the intent of providing greater public access to administrative rule making and to promote consensus among interested parties, agencies must solicit comments from the public on a subject of possible rule making before filing with the code reviser a notice of proposed rule making under RCW 34.05.320. The agency must prepare a statement of inquiry that:

(i) Identifies the specific statute or statutes authorizing the agency to adopt rules on this subject;

(ii) Discusses why rules on this subject may be needed and what they might accomplish;

(iii) Identifies other federal and state agencies that regulate this subject, and describes the process whereby the agency would coordinate the contemplated rule with these agencies;

(iv) Discusses the process by which the rule might be developed, including, but not limited to, negotiated rule making, pilot rule making, or agency study;

(v) Specifies the process by which interested parties can effectively participate in the decision to adopt a new rule and formulation of a proposed rule before its publication.

(b) The statement of inquiry must be filed with the code reviser for publication in the state register at least thirty days before the date the agency files notice of proposed rule making under RCW 34.05.320 and the statement, or a summary of the information contained in that statement, must be sent to any party that has requested receipt of the agency's statements of inquiry.

(2) Agencies are encouraged to develop and use new procedures for reaching agreement among interested parties before publication of notice and the adoption hearing on a proposed rule. Examples of new procedures include, but are not limited to:

(a) Negotiated rule making by which representatives of an agency and of the interests that are affected by a subject of rule making, including, where appropriate, county and city representatives, seek to reach consensus on the terms of the proposed rule and on the process by which it is negotiated; and

(b) Pilot rule making which includes testing the feasibility of complying with or administering draft new rules or draft amendments to existing rules through the use of volunteer pilot groups in various areas and circumstances, as provided in RCW 34.05.313 or as otherwise provided by the agency.

(3) (a) An agency must make a determination whether negotiated rule making, pilot rule making, or another process for generating participation from interested parties prior to development of the rule is appropriate.

(b) An agency must include a written justification in the rule-making file if an opportunity for interested parties to participate in the rule-making process prior to publication of the proposed rule has not been provided.

(4) Except as provided in subsection (5) of this section, this section does not apply to:

(a) Emergency rules adopted under RCW 34.05.350;

(b) Rules relating only to internal governmental operations that are not subject to violation by a nongovernment party;

(c) Rules adopting or incorporating by reference without material change federal statutes or regulations, Washington state statutes, rules of other Washington state agencies, shoreline master programs

other than those programs governing shorelines of statewide significance, or, as referenced by Washington state law, national consensus codes that generally establish industry standards, if the material adopted or incorporated regulates the same subject matter and conduct as the adopting or incorporating rule;

(d) Rules that only correct typographical errors, make address or name changes, or clarify language of a rule without changing its effect;

(e) Rules the content of which is explicitly and specifically dictated by statute;

(f) Rules that set or adjust fees under the authority of RCW 19.02.075 or that set or adjust fees or rates pursuant to legislative standards, including fees set or adjusted under the authority of RCW 19.80.045; or

(g) Rules that adopt, amend, or repeal:

(i) A procedure, practice, or requirement relating to agency hearings; or

(ii) A filing or related process requirement for applying to an agency for a license or permit.

(5) Notwithstanding subsection (4) of this section, this section applies to all rules adopted by the department of health or a disciplining authority specified in RCW 18.130.040 that set or adjust fees affecting professions regulated under chapter 18.130 RCW. [2019 c 303 § 1; 2011 c 298 § 20; 2004 c 31 § 1; 1995 c 403 § 301; 1994 c 249 § 1; 1993 c 202 § 2; 1989 c 175 § 5; 1988 c 288 § 301.]

Purpose—Intent—Agency transfer—Contracting—Effective date—2011 c 298: See notes following RCW 19.02.020.

Application—1995 c 403 §§ 201, 301-305, 401-405, and 801: See note following RCW 34.05.328.

Findings—Short title—Intent—1995 c 403: See note following RCW 34.05.328.

Severability—1994 c 249: "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." [1994 c 249 § 38.]

Application—1994 c 249: "This act applies prospectively only and not retroactively." [1994 c 249 § 36.]

Finding—Intent—1993 c 202: "The legislature finds that while the 1988 Administrative Procedure Act expanded public participation in the agency rule-making process, there continue to be instances when participants have developed adversarial relationships with each other, resulting in the inability to identify all of the issues, the failure to focus on solutions to problems, unnecessary delays, litigation, and added cost to the agency, affected parties, and the public in general.

When interested parties work together, it is possible to negotiate development of a rule that is acceptable to all affected, and that conforms to the intent of the statute the rule is intended to implement.

After a rule is adopted, unanticipated negative impacts may emerge. Examples include excessive costs of administration for the

agency and compliance by affected parties, technical conditions that may be physically or economically unfeasible to meet, problems of interpretation due to lack of clarity, and reporting requirements that duplicate or conflict with those already in place.

It is therefore the intent of the legislature to encourage flexible approaches to developing administrative rules, including but not limited to negotiated rule making and a process for testing the feasibility of adopted rules, often called the pilot rule process. However, nothing in chapter 202, Laws of 1993 shall be construed to create any mandatory duty for an agency to use the procedures in RCW 34.05.310 or 34.05.313 in any particular instance of rule making. Agencies shall determine, in their discretion, when it is appropriate to use these procedures." [1993 c 202 § 1.]

Effective date—1989 c 175: See note following RCW 34.05.010.

Rules coordinator duties regarding business: RCW 43.17.310.