

**RCW 54.16.281 Energy conservation—Utility cool roof program—Tree planting program.** The legislature encourages any public utility district to assist their customers in the acquisition and installation of materials and equipment, for compensation or otherwise, for the conservation or more efficient use of energy including, but not limited to, materials and equipment installed as part of a utility cool roof program. The use of appropriate tree plantings for energy conservation is highly encouraged as part of these programs. It is the policy of the state of Washington that any tree planting program engaged in by a public utility district where energy reduction is a goal as part of a broader energy conservation program under this chapter should accomplish the following:

- (1) Reduce the peak-load demand for electricity in residential and commercial business areas during the summer months through direct shading of buildings provided by strategically planted trees;
- (2) Reduce wintertime demand for energy in residential areas by blocking cold winds from reaching homes, which lowers interior temperatures and drives heating demand;
- (3) Protect public health by removing harmful pollution from the air and prioritize in communities with environmental health disparities;
- (4) Utilize the natural photosynthetic and transpiration process of trees to lower ambient temperatures and absorb carbon dioxide;
- (5) Lower electric bills for residential and commercial business ratepayers by limiting electricity consumption without reducing benefits;
- (6) Relieve financial and demand pressure on the utility that stems from large peak-load electricity demand;
- (7) Protect water quality and public health by reducing and cooling stormwater runoff and keeping harmful pollutants from entering waterways, with special attention given to waterways vital for the preservation of threatened and endangered salmon;
- (8) Ensure that trees are planted in locations that limit the amount of public funding needed to maintain public and electric infrastructure;
- (9) Measure program performance in terms of the estimated present value benefit per tree planted and equitable and accessible community engagement consistent with the department of health's environmental health disparities map recommendations 12 and 13, and with the community engagement plan guidance appendix C of the final report of the environmental justice task force established under chapter 415, Laws of 2019;
- (10) Give special consideration to achieving environmental justice in goals and policies, avoid creating or worsening environmental health disparities, and make use of the department of health's environmental health disparities map to help guide engagement and actions; and
- (11) Coordinate with the department of natural resources urban and community forestry program's efforts to identify areas of need related to urban tree canopy and to provide technical assistance and capacity building to encourage urban tree canopy. [2021 c 11 s 4.]

**Findings—Intent—2021 c 11:** See note following RCW 35.92.355.