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 ninety million five hundred thousand metric tons;

(ii) By 2030, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to fifty million metric tons, or forty-five percent below 1990 levels;

(iii) By 2040, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to twenty-seven million metric tons, or seventy percent below 1990 levels;

(iv) By 2050, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to five million metric tons, or ninety-five 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) By December 31st of each even-numbered year beginning in 2010, the department and the department of commerce shall report to the governor and the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives the total emissions of greenhouse gases for the preceding two years, 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.

(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. [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.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2020 c 20 s 1398, 2020 c 32 s 4, and by 2020 c 79 s 2, without reference to one another. All 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: "(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.