

RCW 70A.65.305 Tribal consultation. (1) Agencies that allocate funding or administer grant programs appropriated from the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250, the climate commitment account created in RCW 70A.65.260, and the natural climate solutions account created in RCW 70A.65.270 must offer early, meaningful, and individual consultation with any affected federally recognized tribe on all funding decisions and funding programs that may impact tribal resources, including tribal cultural resources, archaeological sites, sacred sites, fisheries, or other rights and interests in tribal lands and lands within which a tribe or tribes possess rights reserved or protected by federal treaty, statute, or executive order. The consultation is independent of, and in addition to, any public participation process required by federal or state law, or by a federal or state agency, including the requirements of Executive Order 21-02 related to archaeological and cultural resources, and regardless of whether the agency receives a request for consultation from a federally recognized tribe. The goal of the consultation process is to identify tribal resources or rights potentially affected by the funding decisions and funding programs, assess their effects, and seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects on tribal resources or rights.

(2) At the earliest possible date prior to submittal of an application, applicants for funding from the accounts created in RCW 70A.65.250, 70A.65.260, and 70A.65.270 shall engage in a preapplication process with all affected federally recognized tribes within the project area. During the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, salmon habitat and climate resilience projects funded from the natural climate solutions account created in RCW 70A.65.270 that went through the application and prioritization process before July 1, 2023, are exempt from the preapplication requirements under this subsection.

(a) The preapplication process must include the applicant notifying the department of archaeology and historic preservation, the department of fish and wildlife, and all affected federally recognized tribes within the project area. The notification must include geographical location, detailed scope of the proposed project, preliminary application details available to federal, state, or local governmental jurisdictions, and all publicly available materials, including public funding sources.

(b) The applicant must also offer to discuss the project with the department of archaeology and historic preservation, the department of fish and wildlife, and all affected federally recognized tribes within the project area. Discussions may include the project's impact to tribal resources, including tribal cultural resources, archaeological sites, sacred sites, fisheries, or other rights and interests in tribal lands and lands within which a tribe or tribes possess rights reserved or protected by federal treaty, statute, or executive order.

(c) All affected federally recognized tribes may submit to the appropriate agency or agencies a summary of tribal issues, questions, concerns, or other statements regarding the project, which must become part of the official application file. The summary does not limit what issues affected federally recognized tribes may raise in the consultation process identified in subsections (1), (3) through (7), and (9) of this section.

(d) The notification and offer to initiate discussion must be documented with the application when it is filed, and a copy of the application must be delivered to the department of archaeology and historic preservation, the department of fish and wildlife, and to the

affected federally recognized tribe or tribes. If the discussions pursuant to (b) of this subsection do not occur, the applicant must document the reason why the discussion or discussions did not occur.

(e) Nothing in this section may be interpreted to require the disclosure of information that is exempt from disclosure pursuant to RCW 42.56.300 or federal law, including section 304 of the national historic preservation act of 1966. Any information that is exempt from disclosure pursuant to RCW 42.56.300 or federal law, including section 304 of the national historic preservation act of 1966, shall not become part of the official application file.

(3) If any funding decision, program, project, or activity that may impact tribal resources, including tribal cultural resources, archaeological sites, sacred sites, fisheries, or other rights and interests in tribal lands and lands within which a tribe or tribes possess rights reserved by federal treaty, statute, or executive order is funded from the accounts created in RCW 70A.65.250, 70A.65.260, and 70A.65.270 without such a consultation with an affected federally recognized tribe, the affected federally recognized tribe may request that all further action on the decision, program, project, or activity cease until meaningful consultation is completed. Upon receipt of such a request by an agency or agencies with the authority to allocate funding or administer grant programs from the accounts listed in subsection (1) of this section in support of the proposed project, further action by the agency or agencies on any decision, program, project, or activity that would result in significant physical disturbance of the tribal resource or resources described in this subsection must cease until the consultation has been completed.

(4) Upon completion of agency and tribal consultation, an affected federally recognized tribe may request a formal review of the consultation by submitting a request to the governor's office of Indian affairs and notifying the appropriate agencies and the department of archaeology and historic preservation. The state agencies and tribe must meet to initiate discussion within no more than 20 days of the request. This consultation must be offered and conducted separately with each affected federally recognized tribe, unless the tribes agree to conduct a joint consultation with the state.

(5) After the state agencies and tribe or tribes have conducted a formal review under subsection (4) of this section, an affected federally recognized tribe or state agency may request that the governor and an elected tribal leader or leaders of a federally recognized tribal government meet to formally consider the recommendations from the parties. If requested, this meeting must occur within 30 days of the request, except that a federally recognized tribe may choose to opt out of the meeting. This timeline may be extended by mutual agreement between the governor and the tribal leaders.

(6) After the meeting identified in subsection (5) of this section has occurred, the governor or an elected tribal leader of a federally recognized tribe may call for the state and tribe or tribes to enter into formal mediation, except that a federally recognized tribe may choose to opt out of the mediation. If entered into, the mediation must be conducted as a government-to-government proceeding, with each sovereign government retaining their right to a final decision that meets their separate obligations and interests. Mediators must be jointly selected by the parties to the mediation. An agreement between the governor and a tribal leader or leaders

resulting from the mediation is formally recognized and binding on the signatory parties. Absent an agreement, participation in mediation does not preclude any additional steps that any party can initiate, including legal review, to resolve a continuing disagreement.

(7) During the proceedings outlined in subsections (4) through (6) of this section, the agency or agencies with the authority to allocate funding or administer grant programs from the accounts listed in subsection (1) of this section in support of the proposed project may not approve or release funding, or make other formal decisions, including permitting, that advance the proposed project except where required by law.

(8) By June 30, 2023, the governor's office of Indian affairs, in coordination with the department of archaeology and historic preservation and federally recognized tribes, shall develop a state agency tribal consultation process, including best practices for early, meaningful, and effective consultation, early notification and engagement by applicants with federally recognized tribes as a part of the preapplication process in subsection (2) of this section, and protocols for communication and collaboration with federally recognized tribes. The consultation process developed under this section must be periodically reviewed and updated in coordination with federally recognized tribes. The governor's office of Indian affairs must provide training and other technical assistance to state agencies, as they implement the required consultation. Notwithstanding the governor's office of Indian affairs' ongoing work pursuant to this subsection, the provisions of subsections (1) through (7) and (9) of this section become effective as of June 9, 2022.

(9) The requirements of this section apply to local governments that receive funding from the accounts created in RCW 70A.65.250, 70A.65.260, and 70A.65.270, where that funding is disbursed to project and program applicants. Where requested, the governor's office of Indian affairs must provide training and other technical assistance to local government agencies as they implement the consultation requirements of this section.

(10) Any agency subject to or implementing this section may adopt rules in furtherance of its duties under this section.

(11) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department must establish a tribal capacity grant program to provide funding to federally recognized tribes for the costs of implementing this section. [2024 c 375 s 8004; 2022 c 253 s 1.]

Effective date—2024 c 375: "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 immediately [March 29, 2024]." [2024 c 375 s 8016.]