

RCW 80.50.010 Legislative finding—Policy—Intent. The legislature finds that the present and predicted growth in energy demands in the state of Washington requires a procedure for the selection and use of sites for energy facilities and the identification of a state position with respect to each proposed site. The legislature recognizes that the selection of sites will have a significant impact upon the welfare of the population, the location and growth of industry and the use of the natural resources of the state.

It is the policy of the state of Washington to reduce dependence on fossil fuels by recognizing the need for clean energy in order to strengthen the state's economy, meet the state's greenhouse gas reduction obligations, and mitigate the significant near-term and long-term impacts from climate change while conducting a public process that is transparent and inclusive to all with particular attention to overburdened communities.

The legislature finds that the in-state manufacture of industrial products that enable a clean energy economy is critical to advancing the state's objectives in providing affordable electricity, promoting renewable energy, strengthening the state's economy, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, the legislature intends to provide the council with additional authority regarding the siting of clean energy product manufacturing facilities.

It is the policy of the state of Washington to recognize the pressing need for increased energy facilities, and to ensure through available and reasonable methods that the location and operation of all energy facilities and certain clean energy product manufacturing facilities will produce minimal adverse effects on the environment, ecology of the land and its wildlife, and the ecology of state waters and their aquatic life.

It is the intent to seek courses of action that will balance the increasing demands for energy facility location and operation in conjunction with the broad interests of the public. In addition, it is the intent of the legislature to streamline application review for energy facilities to meet the state's energy goals and to authorize applications for review of certain clean energy product manufacturing facilities to be considered under the provisions of this chapter.

Such action will be based on these premises:

(1) To assure Washington state citizens that, where applicable, operational safeguards are at least as stringent as the criteria established by the federal government and are technically sufficient for their welfare and protection.

(2) To preserve and protect the quality of the environment; to enhance the public's opportunity to enjoy the esthetic and recreational benefits of the air, water and land resources; to promote air cleanliness; to pursue beneficial changes in the environment; and to promote environmental justice for overburdened communities.

(3) To encourage the development and integration of clean energy sources.

(4) To provide abundant clean energy at reasonable cost.

(5) To avoid costs of complete site restoration and demolition of improvements and infrastructure at unfinished nuclear energy sites, and to use unfinished nuclear energy facilities for public uses, including economic development, under the regulatory and management control of local governments and port districts.

(6) To avoid costly duplication in the siting process and ensure that decisions are made timely and without unnecessary delay while also encouraging meaningful public comment and participation in energy facility decisions. [2022 c 183 s 1; 2001 c 214 s 1; 1996 c 4 s 1; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 108 s 29; 1970 ex.s. c 45 s 1.]

Effective date—2022 c 183: "This act takes effect June 30, 2022." [2022 c 183 s 24.]

Severability—2001 c 214: "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." [2001 c 214 s 33.]

Effective date—2001 c 214: "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 [May 8, 2001]." [2001 c 214 s 34.]

Findings—2001 c 214: See note following RCW 39.35.010.

Severability—Effective date—1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 108: See notes following RCW 43.21F.010.

Nuclear power facilities, joint operation: Chapter 54.44 RCW.

State energy office: Chapter 43.21F RCW.