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SENATE BILL 6308

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State of Washington

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By Senators Rockefeller, Regala, Murray, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Pridemore, Oemig, Kilmer, Jacobsen, Kline, Shin, and McAuliffe

Read first time 01/15/08. Referred to Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications.

1 AN ACT Relating to climate change research, preparation, and  
2 adaptation; and adding a new chapter to Title 43 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) While significant efforts to reduce the  
5 rate of climate change are underway in the state and throughout the  
6 nation, significant adverse impacts are likely inevitable over the  
7 course of the twenty-first century. Therefore it is in the public  
8 interest for Washington state to be actively working to both mitigate  
9 the effects of climate change as well as to prepare for the impacts  
10 that cannot be avoided. While the legislature in chapter 307, Laws of  
11 2007, has adopted goals for reducing emissions of climate change gases,  
12 and work is underway to establish a comprehensive program to achieve  
13 these goals, there is not yet a comprehensive program to coordinate the  
14 research and information being compiled on localized impacts of climate  
15 change, and to assist local and state entities and the public generally  
16 in preparing for and adapting to such impacts.

17 (2) It is the purpose of this chapter to authorize a study that  
18 will recommend the elements of such a comprehensive program of climate  
19 change research, preparation, and adaptation.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    The definitions in this section apply  
2 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

3        (1) "Department" means the department of ecology.

4        (2) "Institute" means the joint institute for the study of the  
5 atmosphere and ocean, within the University of Washington.

6        (3) "Work group" means the work group created in section 3(2) of  
7 this act.

8        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    (1) Not later than November 1, 2008, the  
9 department shall report to the governor and the climate-related policy  
10 and fiscal committees of the senate and house of representatives its  
11 recommendations for the creation of a comprehensive climate change  
12 research, preparation, and adaptation program.

13        (2) To assist the department in preparing the report, the  
14 department shall create a work group that includes public and private  
15 sectors interests, including academic research interests, in  
16 climate-related research, planning, and response functions. The work  
17 group should include but not be limited to:    The department of  
18 community, trade, and economic development; the department of natural  
19 resources; the department of fish and wildlife; the department of  
20 health; the department of agriculture; the Puget Sound partnership; the  
21 department of general administration; the state parks and recreation  
22 commission; the office of the insurance commissioner; the joint  
23 institute for the study of the atmosphere and ocean within the  
24 University of Washington; the climate and rural energy development  
25 center within Washington State University; the state climatologist; the  
26 Washington biodiversity council, created by executive order 04-02;  
27 representatives of cities, counties, and special purpose districts; and  
28 tribal governments and federal agencies.

29        (3) The report shall include the following:

30        (a) Recommended procedures and criteria to establish state-funded  
31 research priorities related to assessing climate change impacts and  
32 preparing for and adapting to such impacts;

33        (b) Ways to ensure that the climate change impacts and adaptation  
34 data and information systems will be most effective for and accessible  
35 to relevant planning jurisdictions and the public generally;

36        (c) Recommendations for delivering technical and financial  
37 assistance to local, regional, state, and other planning jurisdictions,

1 specific to activities such as, but not limited to, infrastructure  
2 planning, human health protection, forestry and agriculture, water  
3 supply and water quality protection, and protection of ecosystems and  
4 biodiversity;

5 (d) Recommendations for the range of time horizons and geographic  
6 scales to be addressed in climate impact research and analysis;

7 (e) Mechanisms to ensure that climate change impact data and  
8 analyses are integrated into state and local programs and planning,  
9 including requirements for such integration when receiving state  
10 financial assistance;

11 (f) Recommendations for the development of the initial phases of  
12 the program to be implemented in the 2009-2011 biennium, including  
13 identification or selection of lead agencies and development of any  
14 budget requests necessary to implement each component of this initial  
15 phase; and

16 (g) Recommendations for the incorporation of climate change impacts  
17 into biodiversity conservation planning and programs.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The department shall provide for  
19 dissemination of the comprehensive state climate change assessment  
20 prepared pursuant to section 404, chapter 348, Laws of 2007. The  
21 department shall also compile the preparation advisory work group  
22 reports prepared pursuant to executive order 07-02 and direct them to  
23 appropriate state and local policy-making bodies for consideration of  
24 the recommendations they contain.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The office of Washington state  
26 climatologist is created.

27 (2) The office of Washington state climatologist consists of the  
28 director of the office, who is the state climatologist, and appropriate  
29 staff and administrative support as necessary to carry out the powers  
30 and duties of the office as enumerated in this section.

31 (3) The director of the office must be appointed by the director of  
32 the joint institute for the study of the atmosphere and ocean within  
33 the University of Washington.

34 (4) The office of Washington state climatologist has the following  
35 powers and duties:

1 (a) To serve as a credible and expert source of climate and weather  
2 information for state and local decision makers and agencies working on  
3 drought, flooding, climate change, and other related issues;

4 (b) To gather and disseminate, and where practicable archive, in  
5 the most cost-effective manner possible, all climate and weather  
6 information that is or could be of value to policy and decision makers  
7 in the state;

8 (c) To act as the representative of the state in all climatological  
9 and meteorological matters, both within and outside of the state, when  
10 requested by the legislative or executive branches of the state  
11 government;

12 (d) To prepare, publish, and disseminate climate summaries for  
13 those individuals, agencies, and organizations whose activities are  
14 related to the welfare of the state and are affected by climate and  
15 weather;

16 (e) To supply critical information for drought preparedness and  
17 emergency response as needed to implement the state's drought  
18 contingency response plan maintained by the department under RCW  
19 43.83B.410, and to serve as a member of the state's drought water  
20 supply and emergency response committees as may be formed in response  
21 to a drought event;

22 (f) To conduct and report on studies of climate and weather  
23 phenomena of significant socioeconomic importance to the state; and

24 (g) To evaluate the significance of natural and man-made changes in  
25 important features of the climate affecting the state, and to report  
26 this information to those agencies and organizations in the state who  
27 are likely to be affected by these changes.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) Sections 1 through 5 of this act  
29 constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

30 (2) If chapter --- ([House] [Senate] Bill No. ---), Laws of 2008  
31 becomes law and is codified as a new chapter in Title 43 RCW, sections  
32 1 through 5 of this act shall be codified in the same new chapter in  
33 Title 43 RCW.

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