
SENATE BILL 5626

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senators Rolfes, Frockt, Lovelett, Lovick, Nguyen, Randall, and Stanford

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1 AN ACT Relating to adding a climate resilience element to water
2 system plans; amending RCW 70A.125.180; adding a new section to
3 chapter 43.20 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that climate
6 change impacts pose a significant threat to Washington's drinking
7 water supplies. According to the University of Washington's climate
8 impacts group, the state is projected to experience decreases in
9 snowpack, increases in stream temperatures, and widespread changes in
10 streamflow timing, flooding, and summer minimum flows. These impacts
11 are critical, since the state's drinking water supply is comprised of
12 the affected groundwater sources, surface waters, and snowpack and
13 snowmelt, which recharge rivers, lakes, and aquifers.

14 (2) Climate change is also increasing the frequency of heavier,
15 more intense rainstorms, which in turn increases the threat of
16 flooding for many of Washington's communities and rural areas. In
17 addition to the immediate health threats from flooding, flood waters
18 can damage and contaminate wells and water treatment plants,
19 resulting in short-term outages and increased risk of waterborne
20 diseases in drinking water. These risks come from higher levels of

1 pathogens in the runoff from the areas around drinking water wells
2 and surface water intakes and from flooding of the wells themselves.

3 (3) Competing demands for water among fish, forests, farms, and
4 people are growing as changes in temperature and weather patterns
5 affect seasonal availability of water supplies. These demands, which
6 can interrupt the storage and recharge of water in the state's
7 rivers, lakes, and aquifers, also threaten the availability of
8 drinking water supply.

9 (4) As a result of these impacts, many Washington communities,
10 government agencies, and organizations are preparing for the impacts
11 of climate change on water resources. Therefore, to promote this
12 important effort, the legislature intends to incorporate climate
13 resiliency planning as a part of water system plans to assess the
14 risks posed to drinking water systems and better inform decisions
15 concerning the replacement or improvement of infrastructure. By doing
16 so, the legislature intends to better prepare our communities for the
17 impacts of climate change on drinking water systems.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.20
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 (1)(a) Beginning January 1, 2024, the department is directed to
21 require group A public water systems serving 1,000 or more total
22 connections to include a climate resilience element as part of water
23 system plans.

24 (b) The department must update its water system planning
25 guidebook to assist water systems in implementing the climate
26 resilience element, including guidance on any available technical and
27 financial resources.

28 (2) To fulfill the requirements of the climate resilience
29 element, water systems must:

30 (a) Determine which extreme weather events pose significant
31 challenges to their system and build scenarios to identify potential
32 impacts;

33 (b) Assess critical assets and the actions necessary to protect
34 the system from the consequences of extreme weather events on system
35 operations; and

36 (c) Generate reports describing the costs and benefits of the
37 system's risk reduction strategies for decision makers and
38 stakeholders.

1 (3) Climate readiness projects, including planning to meet the
2 requirements of this section and actions to protect a water system
3 from extreme weather events, including infrastructure and design
4 projects, are eligible for financial assistance under RCW
5 70A.125.180. The department must develop loan eligibility criteria
6 and consider applications from water systems that identify climate
7 readiness projects.

8 **Sec. 3.** RCW 70A.125.180 and 2020 c 20 s 1359 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
11 specific purpose, the department shall provide financial assistance
12 through a water system acquisition and rehabilitation program, hereby
13 created. The program shall be jointly administered with the public
14 works board and the department of commerce. The agencies shall adopt
15 guidelines for the program using as a model the procedures and
16 criteria of the drinking water revolving loan program authorized
17 under RCW 70A.125.160. All financing provided through the program
18 must be in the form of grants or loans that partially cover project
19 costs, including projects and planning required under section 2 of
20 this act. The maximum grant or loan to any eligible entity may not
21 exceed (~~twenty-five~~) 25 percent of the funds allocated to the
22 appropriation in any fiscal year.

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