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**SENATE BILL 5093**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Rolfes, Lovelett, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Liias, Nguyen, Pedersen, Salomon, Valdez, and Wellman; by request of Department of Ecology

AN ACT Relating to improving climate resilience through updates to the state's integrated climate response strategy; amending RCW 70A.05.010, 70A.05.020, 70A.05.030, and 70A.05.040; adding a new section to chapter 70A.05 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that Washington is already experiencing negative community and environmental impacts due to climate change with disproportionate impacts to certain communities and populations and further finds that actions to increase climate resilience, as defined in RCW 70A.65.010, can help prevent and reduce impacts to communities and ecosystems.

(2) The legislature further finds that greater cross-agency coordination on resilience, including an updated statewide climate resilience strategy, will help the state: Avoid high costs in the future; address and reduce the highest risks and greatest vulnerabilities; create more efficiencies; better leverage funding; foster more equitable outcomes; and provide for greater accountability.

(3) The legislature further finds that RCW 70A.65.050 requires an updated statewide strategy for addressing climate risks and improving resilience of communities and ecosystems. Therefore, the legislature intends to direct the department of ecology to update and modernize the *2012 Integrated Climate Response Plan* with the assistance of other state agencies.

(4) The legislature intends for the department of natural resources to continue pursuing climate resilience actions on the public lands they manage and to collaborate with other state agencies in statewide climate resilience efforts.

**Sec.**  RCW 70A.05.010 and 2009 c 519 s 10 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The departments of ecology, agriculture, ((~~community, trade, and economic development~~)) commerce, health, fish and wildlife, natural resources, and transportation, the state conservation commission, the Puget Sound partnership, and the emergency management division shall develop an integrated climate change response strategy to better enable the state ((~~and local agencies, public and private businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals~~)) to prepare for, address, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The integrated climate change response strategy should be developed((~~, where feasible and consistent with the direction of the strategy,~~)) in collaboration with local government agencies and tribal governments with climate change preparation and adaptation plans to the extent feasible.

(2) The department of ecology shall serve as a central ((~~clearinghouse for relevant scientific and technical information about the impacts of climate change on Washington's ecology, economy, and society, as well as serve as a central~~)) convener for the development of vital programs and necessary policies to help the state adapt to a rapidly changing climate.

(3) The department of ecology shall consult and collaborate with, at a minimum, the departments of fish and wildlife, agriculture, ((~~community, trade, and economic development~~)) commerce, health, natural resources, and transportation, the state conservation commission, the Puget Sound partnership, and the emergency management division in developing and implementing an integrated climate change response strategy and plans of action to prepare for and adapt to climate change impacts. Other state agencies may choose to participate in the process.

(4) The department of ecology will engage other relevant state agencies to ensure that other climate resilience actions such as those related to worker safety and community response are incorporated in the updated strategy.

(5) In updating the integrated climate response strategy, the department of ecology shall collaborate and engage with local governments, tribal governments, nongovernmental organizations, public and private businesses, and overburdened communities as defined in RCW 70A.02.010. The department of ecology shall also use guidance from the office of equity, the environmental justice council, the community engagement plan adopted under RCW 70A.02.050, and tribal consultation framework adopted under RCW 70A.02.100 to direct agency engagement with historically or currently marginalized groups, overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and tribal governments.

(6)(a) The department of ecology shall work with the University of Washington climate impacts group to ensure the state has access to relevant scientific and technical information about the impacts of climate change on Washington's ecology, economy, public health, and society, including a central location for accessing this information and use of any existing climate impact tools.

(b) The University of Washington climate impacts group will explore opportunities to partner with other data providers and leverage existing tools that can help further the understanding of climate impacts, such as the department of health's Washington tracking network.

**Sec.**  RCW 70A.05.020 and 2009 c 519 s 11 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The integrated climate change response strategy should address the impact of and adaptation to climate change, as well as the regional capacity to undertake actions, existing ecosystem and resource management concerns, and health and economic risks. ((~~In addition, the departments of ecology, agriculture, community, trade, and economic development, fish and wildlife, natural resources, and transportation should include~~)) Agencies should consider a range of scenarios and time scales for the purposes of planning in order to assess ((~~project vulnerability and, to the extent feasible,~~)) vulnerability of state assets and services and inform agency actions to reduce expected risks and increase resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

(2)(a) By ((~~December 1, 2011~~)) July 1, 2024, the department of ecology shall compile an ((~~initial~~)) updated climate change response strategy, including information and data from the departments of fish and wildlife, agriculture, ((~~community, trade, and economic development~~)) commerce, health, natural resources, and transportation, the state conservation commission, the Puget Sound partnership, and the emergency management division that: ((~~Summarizes the best known science on climate change impacts to Washington; assesses Washington's vulnerability to the identified climate change impacts; prioritizes~~)) Prioritizes solutions that can be implemented within and across state agencies; and identifies recommended funding ((~~mechanisms~~)) and technical and other essential resources for implementing solutions.

(b) The ((~~initial~~)) strategy must include:

(i) ((~~Efforts to identify priority planning areas for action, based on vulnerability and risk assessments;~~

~~(ii) Barriers challenging state and local governments to take action, such as laws, policies, regulations, rules, and procedures that require revision to adequately address adaptation to climate change;~~

~~(iii) Opportunities to integrate climate science and projected impacts into planning and decision making; and~~

~~(iv) Methods to increase public awareness of climate change, its projected impacts on the community, and to build support for meaningful adaptation policies and strategies~~)) A summary of each agency's current climate resilience priorities, plans, and actions;

(ii) Strategies and actions to address the highest climate vulnerabilities and risks to Washington's communities and ecosystems;

(iii) A lead agency or group of agencies assigned to implement actions; and

(iv) Key gaps to advancing climate resilience actions, including in state laws, policies, regulations, rules, procedures, and agency technical capacity.

(c) The strategy must be guided by the following principles:

(i) Prioritize actions that both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate preparedness;

(ii) Protect the state's most overburdened communities and vulnerable populations and provide more equitable outcomes;

(iii) Prioritize actions that deploy natural solutions, restore habitat, or reduce stressors that exacerbate climate impacts;

(iv) Prioritize actions that promote and protect human health;

(v) Consider flexible and adaptive approaches for preparing for uncertain climate impacts, where relevant.

(3) By July 1, 2024, the department of ecology, in coordination with partner agencies, shall provide recommendations to the governor's office and relevant committees of the legislature, consistent with RCW 70A.65.050, on a durable structure for coordinating and implementing the state's climate resilience strategy, including a process for prioritizing and coordinating funding for climate resilience actions across agencies.

(4) The department of ecology shall update the climate response strategy every four years and provide interim biennial work plans to the governor's office that report on implementation progress and summarize agency needs and priorities for biennial budget planning processes starting by September 30, 2025.

(5) Agencies responsible for implementing actions in the updated strategy shall provide information needed for reporting to the department of ecology by August 15th of odd-numbered years starting in 2025. Agencies may identify and include any resources needed to carry out duties under RCW 70A.05.040.

**Sec.**  RCW 70A.05.030 and 2009 c 519 s 12 are each amended to read as follows:

The department((~~s~~)) of ecology((~~, agriculture, community, trade, and economic development, fish and wildlife, natural resources, and transportation~~)) and partner agencies may consult with qualified nonpartisan experts from the scientific community including, but not limited to, the University of Washington's climate impacts group, as needed to assist with ((~~developing an~~)) updating the integrated climate change response strategy. The qualified nonpartisan experts from the scientific community may assist the department of ecology on the following components:

(1) Identifying ((~~the timing and extent of impacts from climate change;~~

~~(2) Assessing the effects of climate variability and change in the context of multiple interacting stressors or impacts;~~

~~(3) Developing forecasting models;~~

~~(4) Determining the resilience of the environment, natural systems, communities, and organizations to deal with potential or actual impacts of climate change and the vulnerability to which a natural or social system is susceptible to sustaining damage from climate change impacts; and~~

~~(5)~~)) best practices and processes for prioritizing resilience actions and assessing the effectiveness of potential actions;

(2) Developing a process for identifying metrics and measuring progress and success towards statewide resilience goals;

(3) Analyzing opportunities and gaps in current agency resilience efforts; and

(4) Identifying other issues, as determined by the department of ecology, necessary to develop policies and actions for the integrated climate change response strategy.

**Sec.**  RCW 70A.05.040 and 2009 c 519 s 13 are each amended to read as follows:

State agencies shall ((~~strive to incorporate adaptation plans of action~~)) consider current and future climate change impacts to the full extent allowed under existing authority and incorporate climate resilience and adaptation actions as priority activities when planning ((~~or~~)), designing, revising, or implementing relevant agency policies and programs. Agencies shall consider: The integrated climate change response strategy when designing, planning, and funding infrastructure projects; and incorporating natural resource adaptation actions and alternative energy sources when designing and planning infrastructure projects.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 70A.05 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department of ecology shall work with the office of financial management and other relevant state agencies and entities to facilitate coordination of a state response to federal funding opportunities related to climate resilience.

(2) In seeking to better coordinate funding for climate resilience, the department of ecology may develop an interagency work group structure and may leverage any existing forums such as the interagency, multijurisdictional system improvement team established in RCW 43.155.150.

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