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**SENATE BILL 5247**

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

**By** Senators Nobles, Saldaña, Cleveland, Hunt, Kuderer, Liias, Lovelett, Lovick, Nguyen, Randall, Rolfes, Shewmake, Stanford, Valdez, Wellman, and C. Wilson; by request of Office of the Governor

AN ACT Relating to developing opportunities for service and workforce programs to support climate-ready communities; adding new sections to chapter 43.41 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28C.18 RCW; creating a new section; and repealing RCW 43.330.310, 50.12.320, and 28C.18.170.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature recognizes that climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the state and the world today, and that we must mobilize Washington's young adults, veterans, and workforce to create the clean energy economy and strengthen our communities and ecosystems in the face of climate impacts.

(2) The legislature finds that service provides a unique opportunity to mobilize young adults and veterans to build clean energy and climate-resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems. Growing equity-centered, climate-related service programs and addressing critical gaps in service opportunities will broaden access to service, ensuring that young adults and veterans of all backgrounds, especially from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, can serve. Doing so will also ensure that service programs address the needs of communities across the state, especially those communities disproportionately impacted by environmental and health burdens.

(3) The legislature further finds as our state transitions away from a fossil fuel-based economy, we must do so in a way that fosters innovation, investment, and growth in clean energy technology sectors and jobs so our businesses, workforce, and communities can thrive. As state, federal, local, and tribal governments implement policies to mitigate the destructive forces of climate change, there will be consequences for Washington's businesses, workers, and communities. Accomplishing an equitable transition will require identification of future industry occupations and skill needs, the existing workforce's transferrable skills to meet those needs, and the gaps that need to be addressed through training and education. The state must also provide support in the transition for workers and communities experiencing declining jobs and revenues associated with high-emissions technologies.

(4) Therefore, to create pathways for workers, young adults, and veterans to help build our clean energy, climate-resilient future, the legislature intends to create the Washington climate corps network and to direct the Washington state workforce training and education coordinating board to establish a clean energy technology advisory committee and to evaluate clean energy technology workforce needs and make recommendations to the governor and legislature.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.41 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The Washington climate corps network is established to support and grow climate-related service opportunities for young adults and veterans with the objective of building low-carbon and climate-resilient communities, ecosystems, and economies while providing education, workforce development, and career pathways to service members, with a focus on overburdened communities as defined in RCW 70A.02.010. The Washington climate corps network shall be administered by serve Washington, an entity created in Executive Order 16-08, signed August 24, 2016. The office shall provide the administrative support to serve Washington to facilitate the establishment and operation of the Washington climate corps network.

(2) Serve Washington has the following duties:

(a) Connect, amplify, and grow climate-related service opportunities to mobilize and train young adults and veterans to build clean energy and climate-resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems, with priority on doing so in overburdened communities as defined in RCW 70A.02.010. In growing new, climate-related service opportunities, serve Washington shall consider the findings and recommendations from the clean energy technology workforce advisory committee established under section 4 of this act;

(b) Establish common requirements for participating service programs including, but not limited to, a focus on climate-related activities, service member participation in events, and service member participation in the service-learning program established in (c) of this subsection;

(c) Develop and administer a service-learning program that provides training to climate corps network service members during their tenure of service. The service-learning program must provide training and learning opportunities to develop leadership skills, foster environmental stewardship and civic engagement, and expose members to an array of climate-related professional and educational opportunities. Training is not intended to supplant or replace technical training or apprenticeship programs hosted by labor unions. Serve Washington shall coordinate with the following entities in the design and administration of the service-learning program: Service programs; tribes; environmental justice organizations; labor organizations; institutions that provide career and technical education; and the workforce training and education coordinating board created in chapter 28C.18 RCW; and

(d) Administer grants to support and broaden access to climate-related service programs, with priority to supporting service in, for, or by members of overburdened communities as defined in RCW 70A.02.010. Serve Washington shall establish a transparent process for establishing priorities and selection criteria. Serve Washington may provide grants to:

(i) Support equitable access to participation in the Washington climate corps network and reduce financial barriers for service members. This includes, but is not limited to, augmenting a service member's living allowance with the intent to achieve or exceed the living wage established in the county of service, if a living wage is in place;

(ii) Reduce the cost of climate corps network service programs to host service members; and

(iii) Support the development of new service programs in geographic and topical areas that currently lack robust climate-related service programs.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.41 RCW to read as follows:

(1) In administration of the Washington climate corps network, the office and serve Washington have the following powers:

(a) The office, in consultation with serve Washington, may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 34.05 RCW as shall be necessary to implement the purpose of this chapter. Rules may include provisions to:

(i) Establish common requirements and eligibility criteria under section 2(2)(b) of this act;

(ii) Establish a transparent process for establishing priorities and selection criteria for grants dispersed under section 2(2)(d) of this act;

(b) Receive gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources that are made for the use or benefit of the Washington climate corps network and to expend the same or any income therefrom according to their terms and the purpose of this chapter.

(2) In carrying out its duties, serve Washington may establish such relationships with public and private institutions, the federal government, tribes, local governments, private industry, community organizations, and other segments of the general public as may be needed to promote and enable climate action through service.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The board shall establish a clean energy technology workforce advisory committee. The goal of the clean energy technology workforce advisory committee is to advise policymakers on efforts to support the expansion of clean energy technology sectors and jobs by prioritizing transition of the existing skilled workforce to new industry sectors and providing training opportunities where needed to address gaps, as well as mitigating the impact of climate change policy transitions to workers, employers, and communities.

(2) The clean energy technology workforce advisory committee shall:

(a) Review workforce and business issues in direct employment in the energy sector, in its supply chain, and the impacts of the energy transition to dependent sectors; and

(b) Recommend strategies to prevent workforce displacement, to support job creation in clean energy technology sectors, and to provide support for workforce-related changes to businesses and for adversely impacted workers.

(3) Clean energy technology workforce advisory committee membership is open to all interested parties including, but not limited to, business and worker representatives from sectors of the economy affected by the transition to clean energy.

(4) The clean energy technology workforce advisory committee shall select a cochair representing business and a cochair representing workers to lead the committee. Board staff shall coordinate with the cochairs to ensure that input into and deliberations of the committee reflect a balance of employer and worker perspectives.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Each biennium, in consultation with the clean energy technology workforce advisory committee established in section 4 of this act and, at minimum, the department of commerce and the employment security department, the board shall evaluate the workforce impact of Washington's climate policies, including:

(a) Labor market trends and current and projected workforce demand in both traditional and clean energy technology professions, and restructuring of jobs and adjusted skillsets associated with climate change mitigation policies;

(b) The wage and benefits range of jobs within the clean energy technology sector;

(c) Demographics of the traditional and clean energy technology sectors;

(d) An inventory of skills needed in clean energy technology jobs, an analysis of how the skills and training of the existing workforce can fill those needs, and identification of additional workforce development needs in this sector; and

(e) Key challenges that could emerge under multiple future decarbonization scenarios based on factors such as rates of adoption of various new energy technologies; growth in demand for clean electricity; and changes in energy production and availability from both in-state and out-of-state sources.

(2) The board shall conduct a literature review of the existing models, data, and study findings related to the evaluation in subsection (1) of this section to ensure a duplication of efforts does not occur.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Each biennium, the board shall develop recommendations for necessary steps to support workforce training required for clean energy technology occupations. The board shall consult with impacted postsecondary training partners, including higher education providers and apprenticeship programs, and consider the following parameters in the development of their analysis and recommendations, including identifying:

(a) Occupational training and skills already covered in existing training programs;

(b) New skills that can be integrated into existing training programs;

(c) Occupations and skillsets that require new training programs to be developed; and

(d) Resources needed to deliver training programs and support workers in the transition to clean energy technology.

(2) The board shall conduct a study of the feasibility of a transition to retirement program to preserve income, medical, and retirement benefits for workers close to retirement who face job loss or transition because of energy technology sector changes. The board may contract with an organization to complete the study.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW to read as follows:

Beginning November 1, 2023, and at least once every two years thereafter, the board shall report to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature with recommendations on how the state can support worker and employer needs in response to changing workforce requirements for clean energy technology. The report must include the recommendations of the clean energy technology workforce advisory committee established in section 4 of this act, the findings of the board's evaluation in section 5 of this act, and the board's training recommendations in section 6 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The following acts or parts of acts are each repealed:

(1) RCW 43.330.310 (Comprehensive green economy jobs growth initiative—Establishment) and 2014 c 112 s 117;

(2) RCW 50.12.320 (Labor market research—High-demand green industries—Middle or high-wage occupations) and 2009 c 536 s 11; and

(3) RCW 28C.18.170 (Green industry skill panels—Prioritization of workforce training programs) and 2009 c 536 s 8.

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