
SENATE BILL 5247

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

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

Read first time 01/11/23. Referred to Committee on State Government & Elections.

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

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

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

13 (2) The legislature finds that service provides a unique
14 opportunity to mobilize young adults and veterans to build clean
15 energy and climate-resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems.
16 Growing equity-centered, climate-related service programs and
17 addressing critical gaps in service opportunities will broaden access
18 to service, ensuring that young adults and veterans of all
19 backgrounds, especially from overburdened communities and vulnerable
20 populations, can serve. Doing so will also ensure that service
21 programs address the needs of communities across the state,

1 especially those communities disproportionately impacted by
2 environmental and health burdens.

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

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

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.41
25 RCW to read as follows:

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

37 (2) Serve Washington has the following duties:

38 (a) Connect, amplify, and grow climate-related service
39 opportunities to mobilize and train young adults and veterans to

1 build clean energy and climate-resilient communities, economies, and
2 ecosystems, with priority on doing so in overburdened communities as
3 defined in RCW 70A.02.010. In growing new, climate-related service
4 opportunities, serve Washington shall consider the findings and
5 recommendations from the clean energy technology workforce advisory
6 committee established under section 4 of this act;

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

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

26 (d) Administer grants to support and broaden access to climate-
27 related service programs, with priority to supporting service in,
28 for, or by members of overburdened communities as defined in RCW
29 70A.02.010. Serve Washington shall establish a transparent process
30 for establishing priorities and selection criteria. Serve Washington
31 may provide grants to:

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

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

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.41
5 RCW to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18
27 RCW to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18
19 RCW to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

37 (e) Key challenges that could emerge under multiple future
38 decarbonization scenarios based on factors such as rates of adoption
39 of various new energy technologies; growth in demand for clean

1 electricity; and changes in energy production and availability from
2 both in-state and out-of-state sources.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18
8 RCW to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18
30 RCW to read as follows:

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

1 act, and the board's training recommendations in section 6 of this
2 act.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** The following acts or parts of acts are
4 each repealed:

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

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

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

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