

Chapter 80.01 RCW
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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RCW 80.01.010 Commission created—Appointment of members—Terms—Vacancies—Removal—Salary. There is hereby created and established a state commission to be known and designated as the Washington utilities and transportation commission, and in this chapter referred to as the commission.

The commission shall be composed of three members appointed by the governor, with the consent of the senate. Not more than two members of said commission shall belong to the same political party.

Each commissioner shall be appointed and hold office for the term of six years. The governor shall designate one of the commissioners to be chair of the commission during the term of the governor.

Each commissioner shall receive a salary as may be fixed by the governor in accordance with the provisions of RCW 43.03.040.

Any member of the commission may be removed for inefficiency, malfeasance or misfeasance in office, upon specific written charges filed by the governor, who shall transmit such written charges to the member accused and to the chief justice of the supreme court. The chief justice shall thereupon designate a special tribunal composed of three judges of the superior court to hear and adjudicate the charges. Such tribunal shall fix the time, place and procedure for the hearing,

and the hearing shall be public. The decision of such tribunal shall be final and not subject to review.

If the tribunal specified herein finds the charges of the governor to be true, the governor shall have the right to immediately remove the commissioner from office, to declare the position of the commissioner vacant, and appoint another commissioner to the position in accordance with the provisions of the law.

Any vacancy arising in the office of commissioner shall be filled by appointment by the governor, and, except for persons appointed as pro tempore commissioners, an appointee selected to fill a vacancy shall hold office for the balance of the full term for which his or her predecessor on the commission was appointed.

If a vacancy occurs while the senate is not in session, the governor shall make a temporary appointment until the next meeting of the senate, when he or she shall present to the senate his or her nomination or nominations for the office to be filled. [2006 c 346 § 1; 1961 c 307 § 4; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.010. Prior: 1955 c 340 § 7; 1951 c 260 § 1; 1949 c 117 § 1; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 10964-115-1. Formerly RCW 43.53.010.]

RCW 80.01.020 Commissioners—Oath, bond, and qualifications—Persons excluded from office and employment. Each commissioner shall, before entering upon the duties of his or her office, take and subscribe the constitutional oath of office, and furnish bond to the state in the sum of twenty thousand dollars conditioned for the faithful discharge of the duties of his or her office and for the proper accounting for all funds that may come into his or her possession by virtue of his or her office. Each commissioner shall be a qualified elector of this state and no person in the employ of or holding any official relation to any corporation or person, which corporation or person is subject in whole or in part to regulation by the commission, and no person owning stocks or bonds of any such corporation or who is in any manner pecuniarily interested therein shall be appointed or hold the office of commissioner or be appointed or employed by the commission: PROVIDED, That if any such person shall become the owner of such stocks or bonds or become pecuniarily interested in such corporation otherwise than voluntarily, he or she shall within a reasonable time divest himself or herself of such ownership or interest, and failing to do so his or her office or employment shall become vacant. [2013 c 23 § 268; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.020. Prior: 1949 c 117 § 2; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 10964-115-2. Formerly RCW 43.53.020 and 43.53.030.]

RCW 80.01.030 Commission to employ secretary and other assistants—Secretary's duties—Deputies. The commission shall appoint and employ a secretary and such accounting, engineering, expert and clerical assistants, and such other qualified assistants as may be necessary to carry on the administrative work of the commission.

The secretary shall be the custodian of the commission's official seal, and shall keep full and accurate minutes of all transactions, proceedings and determinations of the commission and perform such other duties as may be required by the commission.

The commission may deputize one or more of its assistants to perform, in the name of the commission, such duties of the commission

as it deems expedient. The commission may, by rule or order, delegate to designated assistants any of the powers and duties vested in or imposed upon the commission by law except matters governed by chapter 34.05 RCW; however, a matter may not be delegated to a person who has worked as an advocate on the same docket. Delegated powers and duties may be exercised in the name of the commission. The commission by rule shall implement a process by which notice shall be provided of matters designated for delegation. Any such matter shall be heard or reviewed by commissioners at the request of any commissioner or any affected person. [2006 c 346 § 2; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.030. Prior: 1949 c 117 § 4; 1934 c 267 §§ 2, 3, 5 and 6; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 10964-115-4 and Rem. Supp. 1945 §§ 10459-2, 10459-3, 10459-5, 10459-6; prior: compare prior laws as follows: 1955 c 340 § 7; 1951 c 260 § 1; 1949 c 117 §§ 1, 3, 8; 1945 c 267; 1935 c 8 § 1; 1921 c 7 §§ 25, 26; 1911 c 117. Formerly RCW 43.53.040.]

RCW 80.01.035 Appointment of commissioners pro tempore. When a commissioner has heard all or a substantial part of an adjudicative proceeding and leaves office before entry of a final order in the proceeding, at the request of the remaining commissioners the commissioner leaving office may be appointed by the governor as commissioner pro tempore to complete the proceeding. A proceeding is completed when the commission enters a final order purporting to resolve all contested issues therein, from which no party seeks clarification or reconsideration, or upon entry of an order on clarification or reconsideration, even though the order is subject to a petition for judicial review. A commissioner pro tempore shall receive a reasonable compensation to be fixed by the remaining members of the commission. [2006 c 346 § 3.]

RCW 80.01.040 General powers and duties of commission. The utilities and transportation commission shall:

(1) Exercise all the powers and perform all the duties prescribed by this title and by Title 81 RCW, or by any other law.

(2) Regulate in the public interest, as provided by the public service laws, all persons engaging in the transportation of persons or property within this state for compensation.

(3) Regulate in the public interest, as provided by the public service laws, the rates, services, facilities, and practices of all persons engaging within this state in the business of supplying any utility service or commodity to the public for compensation.

(4) Make rules and regulations necessary to carry out its other powers and duties. [2007 c 234 § 1; 1985 c 450 § 10; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.040. Prior: (i) 1949 c 117 § 3; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 10964-115-3. (ii) 1945 c 267 § 5; Rem. Supp. 1945 § 10459-5. (iii) 1945 c 267 § 6; Rem. Supp. 1945 § 10459-6. Formerly RCW 43.53.050.]

Flaggers—Safety standards: RCW 49.17.350.

RCW 80.01.050 Quorum—Hearings—Actions deemed those of the commission. A majority of the commissioners shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business, for the performance of any duty, or for the exercise of any power of the commission, and may hold

hearings at any time or place within or without the state. A quorum of commissioners need not affirm any matter delegated under RCW 80.01.030. Any investigation, inquiry, or hearing which the commission has power to undertake or to hold may be undertaken or held by or before any commissioner or any administrative law judge as provided in RCW 80.01.060. All investigations, inquiries, and hearings of the commission, and all findings, orders, or decisions, made by a commissioner or administrative law judge, when approved and confirmed by the commission or allowed to become final pursuant to RCW 80.01.060 and filed in its office, shall be the orders or decisions of the commission. [2006 c 346 § 4; 1995 c 331 § 2; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.050. Prior: 1949 c 117 § 6; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 10964-115-6. Formerly RCW 43.53.060.]

RCW 80.01.060 Administrative law judges—Powers. (1) The commission may appoint administrative law judges when it deems such action necessary for its general administration. The administrative law judges may administer oaths, issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the production of papers, waybills, books, accounts, documents, and testimony, examine witnesses, make findings of probable cause and issue complaints in the name of the commission, and receive testimony in any inquiry, investigation, hearing, or proceeding in any part of the state, under such rules as the commission may adopt. The administrative law judges appointed under this subsection are not subject to chapter 41.06 RCW; however, they are subject to discipline and termination, for cause, by the executive secretary of the commission. Upon written request of the person so disciplined or terminated, the executive secretary shall state the reasons for such action in writing. The person affected has a right of review by the superior court of Thurston county on petition for reinstatement or other remedy filed within thirty days of receipt of the written reasons.

(2) In general rate increase filings by a natural gas, electric, or telecommunications company, the administrative law judges may preside, but may not enter an initial order unless expressly agreed to in writing by the company making the filing. In all other cases, the administrative law judge may enter an initial order including findings of fact and conclusions of law in accordance with RCW 34.05.461(1)(a) and (c) and (3) through (9) or 34.05.485. RCW 34.05.461(1)(b) and (2) do not apply to entry of orders under this section.

(3) Administrative law judges may not enter final orders, except that the commission may designate persons by rule to preside and enter final orders in emergency adjudications under RCW 34.05.479. Initial orders of administrative law judges shall become final on the day following expiration of the time established by the commission for filing a petition for administrative review, unless, within that time, a party petitions for administrative review or the commission notifies parties that it will review the initial order on its own motion.

(4) If the administrative law judge does not enter an initial order as provided in subsection (2) of this section, then a majority of the members of the commission who are to enter the final order must hear or review substantially all of the record submitted by any party. [2006 c 346 § 5; 1995 c 331 § 3; 1991 c 48 § 1; 1981 c 67 § 35; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.060. Prior: 1925 ex.s. c 164 § 1; RRS § 10779-1. Formerly RCW 43.53.070.]

Effective dates—Severability—1981 c 67: See notes following RCW 34.12.010.

RCW 80.01.070 Joint investigations, hearings, orders. The commission shall have full power to make joint or concurrent investigations, hold joint or concurrent hearings, and issue joint or concurrent orders in conjunction or concurrence with any official, board, or commission of any state or of the United States, whether in the holding of such investigations or hearings or in the making of such orders the commission functions under agreements or compacts between states or under the concurrent power of states to regulate interstate commerce or as an agency of the federal government or otherwise. When necessary the commission may hold such joint hearing or investigation outside the state. [1961 c 14 § 80.01.070. Prior: 1949 c 117 § 7; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 10964-115-7. Formerly RCW 43.53.080.]

RCW 80.01.075 Authority to initiate, participate in federal administrative agency proceedings. The commission shall have the authority as petitioner, intervenor or otherwise to initiate and/or participate in proceedings before federal administrative agencies in which there is at issue the authority, rates or practices for transportation or utility services affecting the interests of the state of Washington, its businesses and general public, and to do all things necessary in its opinion to present to such federal administrative agencies all facts bearing upon such issues, and to similarly initiate and/or participate in any judicial proceedings relating thereto. [1967 ex.s. c 49 § 1.]

RCW 80.01.080 Public service revolving fund. There is created in the state treasury a public service revolving fund. Regulatory fees payable by all types of public service companies shall be deposited to the credit of the public service revolving fund. Except for expenses payable out of the pipeline safety account, all expense of operation of the Washington utilities and transportation commission shall be payable out of the public service revolving fund. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 25 § 11; 2010 1st sp.s. c 37 § 950; 2006 c 3 § 2; 2003 1st sp.s. c 25 § 940; 2002 c 371 § 924; 2001 c 238 § 8; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.080. Prior: 1949 c 117 § 11; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 10964-115-11. Formerly RCW 43.53.090.]

Effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 37: See note following RCW 13.06.050.

Effective date—2006 c 3: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [January 12, 2006]." [2006 c 3 § 3.]

Severability—Effective date—2003 1st sp.s. c 25: See notes following RCW 19.28.351.

Severability—Effective date—2002 c 371: See notes following RCW 9.46.100.

Intent—Finding—Effective date—2001 c 238: See notes following RCW 80.24.060.

RCW 80.01.090 Proceedings public records—Seal. All proceedings of the commission and all documents and records in its possession shall be public records, and it shall adopt and use an official seal. [1998 c 245 § 163; 1987 c 505 § 77; 1977 c 75 § 91; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.090. Prior: 1949 c 117 § 5; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 10964-115-5. Formerly RCW 43.53.100.]

RCW 80.01.100 Duties of attorney general. It shall be the duty of the attorney general to represent and appear for the people of the state of Washington and the commission in all actions and proceedings involving any question under this title or Title 81 RCW, or under or in reference to any act or order of the commission; and it shall be the duty of the attorney general generally to see that all laws affecting any of the persons or corporations herein enumerated are complied with, and that all laws, the enforcement of which devolves upon the commission, are enforced, and to that end he or she is authorized to institute, prosecute, and defend all necessary actions and proceedings. [2013 c 23 § 269; 1961 c 14 § 80.01.100. Prior: 1911 c 117 § 5; RRS § 10341.]

RCW 80.01.110 Wholesale telecommunications services—Commission authorized to review rates, terms, conditions. The commission is authorized to perform the duties required by RCW 53.08.380 and 54.16.340. [2000 c 81 § 10.]

Findings—2000 c 81: See note following RCW 53.08.005.

RCW 80.01.300 Certain provisions not to detract from commission powers, duties, and functions. Nothing contained in the provisions of RCW 36.58A.010 through 36.58A.040 and 70A.205.045 and this section shall detract from the powers, duties, and functions given to the utilities and transportation commission in chapter 81.77 RCW. [2021 c 65 § 92; 1971 ex.s. c 293 § 7.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.