AN ACT Relating to building economic strength through manufacturing; and adding new sections to chapter 43.330 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. This act may be known and cited as the Washington BEST manufacturing act.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. It is the intent of the legislature that Washington state be home to the largest per capita share of workers involved in the manufacturing and research and development sectors of any state in the United States on a consistent basis by 2030. The legislature finds that a thriving research and production sector are complimentary and should be promoted in every region of the state. The legislature finds this is critical to provide a strong, resilient tax base for good schools, safe streets, and community optimism. Therefore, the legislature intends to build institutional capacity, such as well-equipped and staffed skill centers and research and manufacturing industrial councils, in state government and every geographic region of the state to achieve the goal of being universally recognized as the best state in the nation for both manufacturing and research and development.
NEW SECTION.  Sec. 3. (1) The department is responsible for implementing the state’s goal to consistently have the highest share of workforce involved in manufacturing and research and development occupations of any state in the United States. The department is responsible for building capacity in every region of the state to allow any person who wants to do so to learn the skills to enter into the manufacturing or research and development field and find abundant local employment opportunities in those fields.

(2) Each fiscal biennium, the department must convene stakeholders in manufacturing and research and development for the purpose of compiling a report to the legislature on the performance to date in attainment of the goal in subsection (1) of this section and to identify any public policy obstacles hindering advancement toward the goal. The biennial report must provide recommendations to the legislature. All state agencies are directed to provide such expertise, information, and resources as requested by the stakeholders to facilitate identification and analysis of public policy problems and potential recommendations.

(3) The department shall establish permanent regional offices to be staffed with a lead coordinator. The responsibilities of the lead coordinator in each region include, but are not limited to:

(a) Establishing a research and manufacturing industrial council comprised of private sector, not-for-profit, and public sector leaders;

(b) Identifying local skill centers and fostering the appropriate expansion of existing skill centers or creation of additional capacity; and

(c) Promoting and fostering skilled trade learning programs that connect students of all ages, teachers, and employers.

(4) The department shall coordinate with the office of the superintendent of public instruction and the state board for community and technical colleges to assess any inadequacy or gaps in delivering hands-on, skills-based learning remotely to all Washingtonians seeking to enter the manufacturing workforce or to be retrained for a transition within the manufacturing workforce. The department shall convene stakeholders to obtain information about experiences of lost opportunity during the COVID-19 pandemic related to workforce training that resulted from closures or limitations at on-site and in-person training facilities. The department shall provide a report to the legislature with any recommendations on how
Washington can be the world leader in best practices for delivering remote learning opportunities adapted to the manufacturing workplace. (5) The department shall report to the legislature by December 31, 2021, on the feasibility of forming both a state manufacturing office and a state research and development office within the department, akin to the current state energy office created under chapter 43.21F RCW, for the purpose of being home to appropriate expertise, leadership, and coordination of effort to support the attainment of the goal under subsection (1) of this section.

(6) For so long as the department retains a key sector focus organization for economic development purposes, it shall employ a sector lead for general manufacturing, and a sector lead for research and development.

(7) In pursuit of the goal in subsection (1) of this section, the department may expend resources to feature and promote a particular innovation, product, or industry subclassification. The department may not discriminate against or fail to use best efforts on behalf of any lawful manufacturing or research and development activity that seeks to employ Washingtonians.

(8) The department must submit reports required under this section, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, to the appropriate committees of the legislature.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. Sections 1 through 3 of this act are each added to chapter 43.330 RCW and codified with the subchapter heading of "MANUFACTURING AND RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR PROMOTION."

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