
HOUSE BILL 1958

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Berg, Boehnke, Chapman, Ryu, Paul, Peterson, Frame, and Taylor

Read first time 01/12/22. Referred to Committee on Capital Budget.

1 AN ACT Relating to accelerating rural job growth and promoting
2 economic recovery across Washington through a shovel-ready site
3 certification program and grants; amending RCW 43.160.060; adding a
4 new section to chapter 43.160 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that while many
7 of Washington's high-wage industries, particularly those clustered
8 around the Puget Sound corridor, have weathered both public health
9 and economic crises well, many rural communities continue to struggle
10 to recover without adequate access to resources. This has negative
11 impacts on rural communities' broader ability to retain and grow
12 family-wage jobs and local businesses, grow their tax base, and
13 provide basic government services.

14 (2) The legislature further finds that reliable, modern
15 infrastructure is critical for successful economic recovery and
16 development. The underpinning of all commerce is physical
17 infrastructure: Roads, transit, airports, railroads, water and sewer,
18 broadband, and energy. Public investments in infrastructure create
19 construction jobs, set the stage for future private investment, and
20 shape an area's prospects for generations. New or relocating

1 businesses often factor in the degree of certainty in timing of
2 permitting and predevelopment work in selecting a site to locate.

3 (3) Therefore, the legislature intends to promote permanent job
4 growth, ensure equitable recovery, and provide businesses as much
5 predictability and certainty as possible through a "shovel-ready"
6 certification program and investments in predevelopment work to help
7 give new or relocating businesses the assurance and confidence they
8 need to choose Washington communities as their next home.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.160.060 and 2014 c 112 s 108 are each amended to
10 read as follows:

11 (1) The board is authorized to make direct loans to political
12 subdivisions of the state and to federally recognized Indian tribes
13 for the purposes of assisting the political subdivisions and
14 federally recognized Indian tribes in financing the cost of public
15 facilities, including development of land and improvements for public
16 facilities, project-specific environmental, capital facilities, land
17 use, permitting, feasibility, and marketing studies and plans;
18 project design, site planning, and analysis; project debt and revenue
19 impact analysis; as well as the construction, rehabilitation,
20 alteration, expansion, or improvement of the facilities. A grant may
21 also be authorized for purposes designated in this chapter, but only
22 when, and to the extent that, a loan is not reasonably possible,
23 given the limited resources of the political subdivision or the
24 federally recognized Indian tribe and the finding by the board that
25 financial circumstances require grant assistance to enable the
26 project to move forward. However, no more than twenty-five percent of
27 all financial assistance approved by the board in any biennium may
28 consist of grants to political subdivisions and federally recognized
29 Indian tribes.

30 (2) Application for funds must be made in the form and manner as
31 the board may prescribe. In making grants or loans the board must
32 conform to the following requirements:

33 (a) The board may not provide financial assistance:

34 (i) For a project the primary purpose of which is to facilitate
35 or promote a retail shopping development or expansion.

36 (ii) For any project that evidence exists would result in a
37 development or expansion that would displace existing jobs in any
38 other community in the state.

1 (iii) For a project the primary purpose of which is to facilitate
2 or promote gambling.

3 (iv) For a project located outside the jurisdiction of the
4 applicant political subdivision or federally recognized Indian tribe.

5 (b) The board may only provide financial assistance:

6 (i) For a project demonstrating convincing evidence that a
7 specific private development or expansion is ready to occur and will
8 occur only if the public facility improvement is made that:

9 (A) Results in the creation of significant private sector jobs or
10 significant private sector capital investment as determined by the
11 board; and

12 (B) Will improve the opportunities for the successful
13 maintenance, establishment, or expansion of industrial or commercial
14 plants or will otherwise assist in the creation or retention of long-
15 term economic opportunities;

16 (ii) For a project that cannot meet the requirement of (b)(i) of
17 this subsection but is a project that:

18 (A) Results in the creation of significant private sector jobs or
19 significant private sector capital investment as determined by the
20 board;

21 (B) Is part of a local economic development plan consistent with
22 applicable state planning requirements;

23 (C) Can demonstrate project feasibility using standard economic
24 principles; and

25 (D) Is located in a rural community as defined by the board, or a
26 rural county;

27 (iii) For site-specific plans, studies, and analyses that address
28 environmental impacts, capital facilities, land use, permitting,
29 feasibility, marketing, project engineering, design, site planning,
30 costs of achieving shovel-ready status, and project debt and revenue
31 impacts, as grants (~~not to exceed fifty thousand dollars~~). After
32 December 31, 2026, such grants may not exceed \$200,000.

33 (c) The board must develop guidelines for local participation and
34 allowable match and activities.

35 (d) An application must demonstrate local match and local
36 participation, in accordance with guidelines developed by the board.

37 (e) An application must be approved by the political subdivision
38 and supported by the local associate development organization or
39 local workforce development council or approved by the governing body
40 of the federally recognized Indian tribe.

1 (f) The board may allow de minimis general system improvements to
2 be funded if they are critically linked to the viability of the
3 project.

4 (g) An application must demonstrate convincing evidence that the
5 median hourly wage of the private sector jobs created after the
6 project is completed will exceed the countywide median hourly wage.

7 (h) The board must prioritize each proposed project according to:

8 (i) The relative benefits provided to the community by the jobs
9 the project would create, not just the total number of jobs it would
10 create after the project is completed, but also giving consideration
11 to the unemployment rate in the area in which the jobs would be
12 located;

13 (ii) The rate of return of the state's investment, including, but
14 not limited to, the leveraging of private sector investment,
15 anticipated job creation and retention, and expected increases in
16 state and local tax revenues associated with the project;

17 (iii) Whether the proposed project offers a health insurance plan
18 for employees that includes an option for dependents of employees;

19 (iv) Whether the public facility investment will increase
20 existing capacity necessary to accommodate projected population and
21 employment growth in a manner that supports infill and redevelopment
22 of existing urban or industrial areas that are served by adequate
23 public facilities. Projects should maximize the use of existing
24 infrastructure and provide for adequate funding of necessary
25 transportation improvements;

26 (v) Whether the applicant's permitting process has been certified
27 as streamlined by the office of regulatory assistance; and

28 (vi) Whether the applicant has developed and adhered to
29 guidelines regarding its permitting process for those applying for
30 development permits consistent with section 1(2), chapter 231, Laws
31 of 2007.

32 (i) A responsible official of the political subdivision or the
33 federally recognized Indian tribe must be present during board
34 deliberations and provide information that the board requests.

35 (3) Before any financial assistance application is approved, the
36 political subdivision or the federally recognized Indian tribe
37 seeking the assistance must demonstrate to the community economic
38 revitalization board that no other timely source of funding is
39 available to it at costs reasonably similar to financing available
40 from the community economic revitalization board.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.160
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
4 specific purpose, the department must develop and implement a shovel-
5 ready certification program for the purpose of certifying sites
6 seeking shovel-ready status designation.

7 (2) In developing the program, the department must consult with
8 the community economic revitalization board, economic development
9 professionals, industry leaders, and local governments. The
10 department may consult with other interested parties at its
11 discretion.

12 (3) The department must establish an application process for the
13 program and criteria for certification.

14 (4) The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

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