
SENATE BILL 5703

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Holy, Riccelli, Short, Christian, Fortunato, Lovelett,
and Nobles

Referred to Committee on Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to fair treatment of municipal solid waste
2 systems; amending RCW 70A.65.080; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds, based on a study
5 published by the department of ecology in March 2024, that the only
6 waste to energy system in the state will emit less greenhouse gases
7 when compared to the alternative of managing, hauling, and disposing
8 of that system's waste to landfills in other communities. The
9 legislature intends to treat all municipal solid waste management
10 systems equally throughout the state under the Washington cap and
11 invest program. This act achieves equal treatment of all communities
12 with municipal solid waste management systems under the Washington
13 cap and invest program by adding a narrow program exemption for the
14 state's only waste to energy municipal solid waste management system.

15 **Sec. 2.** RCW 70A.65.080 and 2024 c 352 s 4 are each amended to
16 read as follows:

17 (1) A person is a covered entity as of the beginning of the first
18 compliance period and all subsequent compliance periods if the person
19 reported emissions under RCW 70A.15.2200 for any calendar year from
20 2015 through 2019, or if additional data provided as required by this

1 chapter indicates that emissions for any calendar year from 2015
2 through 2019 equaled or exceeded any of the following thresholds, or
3 if the person is a first jurisdictional deliverer and imports
4 electricity into the state during the compliance period:

5 (a) Where the person owns or operates a facility and the
6 facility's emissions equal or exceed 25,000 metric tons of carbon
7 dioxide equivalent;

8 (b) Where the person is a first jurisdictional deliverer and
9 generates electricity in the state and emissions associated with this
10 generation equals or exceeds 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide
11 equivalent;

12 (c)(i) Where the person is a first jurisdictional deliverer
13 importing electricity into the state and:

14 (A) For specified sources, the cumulative annual total of
15 emissions associated with the imported electricity exceeds 25,000
16 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent;

17 (B) For unspecified sources, the cumulative annual total of
18 emissions associated with the imported electricity exceeds 0 metric
19 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent; or

20 (C) For electricity purchased from a federal power marketing
21 administration pursuant to section 5(b) of the Pacific Northwest
22 electric power planning and conservation act of 1980, P.L. 96-501, if
23 the department determines such electricity is not from a specified
24 source, the cumulative annual total of emissions associated with the
25 imported electricity exceeds 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide
26 equivalent.

27 (ii) In consultation with any linked jurisdiction to the program
28 created by this chapter, by October 1, 2026, the department, in
29 consultation with the department of commerce and the utilities and
30 transportation commission, shall adopt by rule a methodology for
31 addressing imported electricity associated with a centralized
32 electricity market;

33 (d) Where the person is a supplier of fossil fuel other than
34 natural gas and from that fuel 25,000 metric tons or more of carbon
35 dioxide equivalent emissions would result from the full combustion or
36 oxidation, excluding the amounts for fuel products that are produced
37 or imported with a documented final point of delivery outside of
38 Washington and combusted outside of Washington; and

39 (e)(i) Where the person supplies natural gas in amounts that
40 would result in exceeding 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide

1 equivalent emissions if fully combusted or oxidized, excluding the
2 amounts for fuel products that are produced or imported with a
3 documented final point of delivery outside of Washington and
4 combusted outside of Washington, and excluding the amounts: (A)
5 Supplied to covered entities under (a) through (d) of this
6 subsection; and (B) delivered to opt-in entities;

7 (ii) Where the person who is not a natural gas company and has a
8 tariff with a natural gas company to deliver to an end-use customer
9 in the state in amounts that would result in exceeding 25,000 metric
10 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions if fully combusted or
11 oxidized, excluding the amounts: (A) Supplied to covered entities
12 under (a) through (d) of this subsection; and (B) the amounts
13 delivered to opt-in entities;

14 (iii) Where the person is an end-use customer in the state who
15 directly purchases natural gas from a person that is not a natural
16 gas company and has the natural gas delivered through an interstate
17 pipeline to a distribution system owned by the purchaser in amounts
18 that would result in exceeding 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide
19 equivalent emissions if fully combusted or oxidized, excluding the
20 amounts: (A) Supplied to covered entities under (a) through (d) of
21 this subsection; and (B) delivered to opt-in entities.

22 ~~(2) ((A person is a covered entity as of the beginning of the
23 second compliance period and all subsequent compliance periods if the
24 person reported emissions under RCW 70A.15.2200 or provided emissions
25 data as required by this chapter for any calendar year from 2023
26 through 2025, where the person owns or operates a waste to energy
27 facility utilized by a county and city solid waste management program
28 and the facility's emissions equal or exceed 25,000 metric tons of
29 carbon dioxide equivalent.~~

30 ~~(3))~~ A person is a covered entity as of the beginning of the
31 third compliance period, and all subsequent compliance periods if the
32 person reported emissions under RCW 70A.15.2200 or provided emissions
33 data as required by this chapter for 2027 or 2028, where the person
34 owns or operates a railroad company, as that term is defined in RCW
35 81.04.010, and the railroad company's emissions equal or exceed
36 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

37 ~~((4))~~ (3) When a covered entity reports, during a compliance
38 period, emissions from a facility under RCW 70A.15.2200 that are
39 below the thresholds specified in subsection (1) ~~((or (2)))~~ of this
40 section, the covered entity continues to have a compliance obligation

1 through the current compliance period. When a covered entity reports
2 emissions below the threshold for each year during an entire
3 compliance period, or has ceased all processes at the facility
4 requiring reporting under RCW 70A.15.2200, the entity is no longer a
5 covered entity as of the beginning of the subsequent compliance
6 period unless the department provides notice at least 12 months
7 before the end of the compliance period that the facility's emissions
8 were within 10 percent of the threshold and that the person will
9 continue to be designated as a covered entity in order to ensure
10 equity among all covered entities. Whenever a covered entity ceases
11 to be a covered entity, the department shall notify the appropriate
12 policy and fiscal committees of the legislature of the name of the
13 entity and the reason the entity is no longer a covered entity.

14 ~~((+5))~~ (4) For types of emission sources described in subsection
15 (1) of this section that begin or modify operation after January 1,
16 2023, ~~((and types of emission sources described in subsection (2) of
17 this section that begin or modify operation after 2027,))~~ coverage
18 under the program starts in the calendar year in which emissions from
19 the source exceed the applicable thresholds in subsection (1) ~~((or
20 +2))~~ of this section, or upon formal notice from the department that
21 the source is expected to exceed the applicable emissions threshold,
22 whichever happens first. Sources meeting these conditions are
23 required to transfer their first allowances on the first transfer
24 deadline of the year following the year in which their emissions were
25 equal to or exceeded the emissions threshold.

26 ~~((+6))~~ (5) For emission sources described in subsection (1) of
27 this section that are in operation or otherwise active between 2015
28 and 2019 but were not required to report emissions for those years
29 under RCW 70A.15.2200 for the reporting periods between 2015 and
30 2019, coverage under the program starts in the calendar year
31 following the year in which emissions from the source exceed the
32 applicable thresholds in subsection (1) of this section as reported
33 pursuant to RCW 70A.15.2200 or provided as required by this chapter,
34 or upon formal notice from the department that the source is expected
35 to exceed the applicable emissions threshold for the first year that
36 source is required to report emissions, whichever happens first.
37 Sources meeting these criteria are required to transfer their first
38 allowances on the first transfer deadline of the year following the
39 year in which their emissions, as reported under RCW 70A.15.2200 or

1 provided as required by this chapter, were equal to or exceeded the
2 emissions threshold.

3 ~~((+7))~~ (6) The following emissions are exempt from coverage in
4 the program, regardless of the emissions reported under RCW
5 70A.15.2200 or provided as required by this chapter:

6 (a) Emissions from the combustion of aviation fuels;

7 (b) Emissions from watercraft fuels supplied in Washington that
8 are combusted outside of Washington;

9 (c) Emissions from a coal-fired electric generation facility
10 exempted from additional greenhouse gas limitations, requirements, or
11 performance standards under RCW 80.80.110;

12 (d) Carbon dioxide emissions from the combustion of biomass or
13 biofuels;

14 (e)(i) Motor vehicle fuel or special fuel that is used
15 exclusively for agricultural purposes by a farm fuel user. This
16 exemption is available only if a buyer of motor vehicle fuel or
17 special fuel provides the seller with an exemption certificate in a
18 form and manner prescribed by the department. For the purposes of
19 this subsection, "agricultural purposes" and "farm fuel user" have
20 the same meanings as provided in RCW 82.08.865.

21 (ii) The department must determine a method for expanding the
22 exemption provided under (e)(i) of this subsection to include fuels
23 used for the purpose of transporting agricultural products on public
24 highways. The department must maintain this expanded exemption for a
25 period of five years, in order to provide the agricultural sector
26 with a feasible transition period;

27 (f) Emissions from facilities with North American industry
28 classification system code 92811 (national security); ~~((and))~~

29 (g) Emissions from municipal solid waste landfills that are
30 subject to, and in compliance with, chapter 70A.540 RCW; and

31 (h) Emissions from a waste to energy facility utilized by a
32 county and city solid waste management program permitted to receive
33 solid waste before 1992 that is subject to, and in compliance with,
34 chapter 70A.15 RCW and chapter 173-441 WAC.

35 ~~((+8))~~ (7) The department shall not require multiple covered
36 entities to have a compliance obligation for the same emissions. The
37 department may by rule authorize refineries, fuel suppliers,
38 facilities using natural gas, and natural gas utilities to provide by
39 agreement for the assumption of the compliance obligation for fuel or
40 natural gas supplied and combusted in the state. The department must

1 be notified of such an agreement at least 12 months prior to the
2 compliance obligation period for which the agreement is applicable.

3 ~~((+9))~~ (8)(a) The legislature intends to promote a growing and
4 sustainable economy and to avoid leakage of emissions from
5 manufacturing to other locations. The legislature further intends to
6 see innovative new businesses locate and grow in Washington that
7 contribute to Washington's prosperity and environmental objectives.

8 (b) Consistent with the intent of the legislature to avoid the
9 leakage of emissions to other jurisdictions, in achieving the state's
10 greenhouse gas limits in RCW 70A.45.020, the state, including lead
11 agencies under chapter 43.21C RCW, shall pursue the limits in a
12 manner that recognizes that the siting and placement of new or
13 expanded best-in-class facilities with lower carbon emitting
14 processes is in the economic and environmental interests of the state
15 of Washington.

16 (c) In conducting a life-cycle analysis, if required, for new or
17 expanded facilities that require review under chapter 43.21C RCW, a
18 lead agency must evaluate and attribute any potential net cumulative
19 greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the project as compared to
20 other existing facilities or best available technology including
21 best-in-class facilities and emerging lower carbon processes that
22 supply the same product or end use. The department may adopt rules to
23 determine the appropriate threshold for applying this analysis.

24 (d) Covered emissions from an entity that is or will be a covered
25 entity under this chapter may not be the basis for denial of a permit
26 for a new or expanded facility. Covered emissions must be included in
27 the analysis undertaken pursuant to (c) of this subsection. Nothing
28 in this subsection requires a lead agency or a permitting agency to
29 approve or issue a permit to a permit applicant, including to a new
30 or expanded fossil fuel project.

31 (e) A lead agency under chapter 43.21C RCW or a permitting agency
32 shall allow a new or expanded facility that is a covered entity or
33 opt-in entity to satisfy a mitigation requirement for its covered
34 emissions under this chapter and under any greenhouse gas emission
35 mitigation requirements for covered emissions under chapter 43.21C
36 RCW by submitting to the department the number of compliance
37 instruments equivalent to its covered emissions during a compliance
38 period.

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