

Chapter 70A.207 RCW
WASHINGTON CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD MANAGEMENT

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RCW 70A.207.010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Center" means the Washington center for sustainable food management.

(2) "Department" means the department of ecology.

(3) "Organic material" has the same definition as provided in RCW 70A.205.015.

(4) "Plan" means the use food well Washington plan developed under RCW 70A.205.715. [2022 c 180 s 401.]

Findings—Intent—Scope of authority of chapter 180, Laws of 2022—2022 c 180: See notes following RCW 70A.205.007.

RCW 70A.207.020 Washington center for sustainable food management—Established—Purpose—Authorized activities—Rules. (1) The Washington center for sustainable food management is established within the department.

(2) The purpose of the center is to help coordinate statewide food waste reduction.

(3) The center may perform the following activities:

(a) Coordinate the implementation of the plan;

(b) Draft plan updates and measure progress towards actions, strategies, and the statewide goals established in RCW 70A.205.007 and 70A.205.715(1);

(c) Maintain a website with current food waste reduction information and guidance for food service establishments, consumers, food processors, hunger relief organizations, and other sources of food waste;

(d) Provide staff support to multistate food waste reduction initiatives in which the state is participating;

(e) Maintain the consistency of the plan and other food waste reduction activities with the work of the Washington state conservation commission's food policy forum;

(f) Facilitate and coordinate public-private and nonprofit partnerships focused on food waste reduction, including through voluntary working groups;

(g) Collaborate with federal, state, and local government partners on food waste reduction initiatives;

(h) Develop and maintain maps or lists of locations of the food systems of Washington that identify food flows, where waste occurs, and opportunities to prevent food waste;

(i) (i) Collect and maintain data on food waste and wasted food in a manner that is generally consistent with the methods of collecting and maintaining such data used by federal agencies or in other jurisdictions, or both, to the greatest extent practicable;

(ii) Develop measurement methodologies and tools to uniformly track food donation data, food waste prevention data, and associated climate impacts resultant from food waste reduction efforts;

(j) Research and develop emerging organic materials and food waste reduction markets;

(k) (i) Develop and maintain statewide food waste reduction and food waste contamination reduction campaigns, in consultation with other state agencies and other stakeholders, including the development of waste prevention and food waste recovery promotional materials for distribution. These promotional materials may include online information, newsletters, bulletins, or handouts that inform food service establishment operators about the protections from civil and criminal liability under federal law and under RCW 69.80.031 when donating food; and

(ii) Develop guidance to support the distribution of promotional materials, including distribution by:

(A) Local health officers, at no cost to regulated food service establishments, including as part of normal, routine inspections of food service establishments; and

(B) State agencies, including the department of health and the department of agriculture, in conjunction with their statutory roles and responsibilities in regulating, monitoring, and supporting safe food supply chains and systems;

(l) Distribute and monitor grants dedicated to food waste prevention, rescue, and recovery, which must include the programs described in RCW 70A.207.040 and 70A.207.050;

(m) Provide staff support to the work group created in section 701, chapter 341, Laws of 2024; and

(n) Research and provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to local governments in support of the adoption of solid waste ordinances or policies that establish a financial disincentive for the generation of organic waste and for the ultimate disposal of organic materials in landfills.

(4) The department may enter into an interagency agreement with the department of health, the department of agriculture, or other state agencies as necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the center.

(5) The department may adopt any rules necessary to implement this chapter including, but not limited to, measures for the center's performance. [2024 c 341 s 203; 2022 c 180 s 402.]

Findings—2024 c 341: See note following RCW 70A.207.040.

Findings—Intent—Scope of authority of chapter 180, Laws of 2022—2022 c 180: See notes following RCW 70A.205.007.

RCW 70A.207.030 Model ordinances—Mechanisms for commercial solid waste collection and disposal. (1) By January 1, 2025, and in

consultation with the office of the attorney general, the department must research and adopt several model ordinances for optional use by counties and cities that provide for model mechanisms for commercial solid waste collection and disposal that are designed, in part, to establish a financial disincentive or other disincentives for the generation of organic waste and for the ultimate disposal of organic materials in landfills. The model ordinances must be designed to provide options that might be preferred by jurisdictions of different sizes and consider other key criteria applicable to local solid waste management circumstances.

(2) (a) The department must review the model ordinances created in this section under the provisions of chapter 43.21C RCW.

(b) A county or city that adopts a model ordinance created by the department under this section and that has been reviewed by the department under the provisions of chapter 43.21C RCW is not required to review the ordinance under the provisions of chapter 43.21C RCW.

(3) No city, town, or county is required to adopt the model ordinances created in this section. [2022 c 180 s 405.]

Findings—Intent—Scope of authority of chapter 180, Laws of 2022—2022 c 180: See notes following RCW 70A.205.007.

RCW 70A.207.040 Grant programs—Diversion of organic materials.

(1) The department, through the center, must develop and administer grant programs to support activities that reduce emissions from landfills and waste-to-energy facilities through the diversion of organic materials and food waste prevention, rescue, and recovery. The department must seek stakeholder input in the design, criteria, and logistics associated with each grant program. The department must allocate grant funding across the eligible categories specified in subsection (2) of this section in a manner consistent with legislative appropriations, and that achieves the following priorities:

(a) Maximizing greenhouse gas emission reductions;

(b) Eliminating barriers to the rescue and consumption of edible food that would otherwise be wasted;

(c) Developing stable funding programs for the department to administer and stable funding opportunities for potential fund recipients to be aware of; and

(d) Preferences the following management options, in order of most preferred to least preferred:

(i) Prevents wasted food;

(ii) Donates or upcycles food;

(iii) Feeds animals or leaves food unharvested;

(iv) Composts or anaerobically digests materials with beneficial use of the compost, digestate, or biosolids;

(v) Anaerobically digests materials with the disposal of digestate or biosolids, or applies material to the land;

(vi) Sends materials down the drain, to landfills, or incinerates material, with or without accompanying energy recovery.

(2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, grants under this section may be awarded to the following categories of activities:

(a) Projects to prevent the surplus of unsold, uneaten food from food businesses or to standardize and improve the operating procedures associated with food donations, including efforts to standardize

collection bins, provide staff training for food donors or food rescue organizations, or make other changes to increase the efficiency or efficacy of food donation procedures. Local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes and federally recognized Indian tribal government entities, nonprofit organizations, and generators of unwanted edible food are eligible applicants for grants under this subsection. Equipment and infrastructure purchases, training costs, costs associated with the development and deployment of operating protocols, and employee staff time reimbursement are eligible uses of grant funding under this subsection;

(b) (i) Projects to improve and reduce the transportation of donated foods and management of cold chains across the donated food supply chain, including through food rescue organizations. Local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes and federally recognized Indian tribal government entities, nonprofit organizations, transporters of unwanted edible food, and generators of unwanted edible food are eligible applicants for grants under this subsection. Eligible uses of grant funding under this subsection include the acquisition of vehicles, cold-storage equipment, real estate, and technology to support donated food storage and transportation system improvements.

(ii) Grants under this subsection (2) (b) may not be used for the purchase or lease of equipment that relies on a fuel source other than electricity or the purchase or lease of vehicles other than zero-emission vehicles;

(c) (i) Grant programs to support the establishment and expansion of wasted food reduction programs to benefit vulnerable communities. This grant program must be developed in consultation with the department of health and food policy stakeholders.

(ii) Nonprofit organizations, businesses, associations, federally recognized Indian tribes and federally recognized Indian tribal government entities, and local governments are eligible to receive grants under this subsection. Eligible uses of the funds may include community food hub development projects, cold food storage capacity, refrigerated transport capacity, convenings to inform innovation in wasted food reduction in retail and food service establishments, and pilot projects to reduce wasted food. No more than 20 percent of funds allocated under this subsection (2) (c) may be awarded to a single grant recipient; and

(d) Food waste tracking and analytics pilot project grants. Local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes and federally recognized Indian tribal government entities, nonprofit organizations, transporters of unwanted edible food, and generators of unwanted edible food are eligible applicants for grants under this subsection. Eligible uses of grant funding under this subsection include staff time and technology to improve food waste prevention or improve tracking of food donations through the food supply chain and to provide data useful to enabling more efficient and effective outcomes for the provision of food available for rescue.

(3) The department may establish additional eligibility criteria or application process requirements beyond those described in subsection (2) of this section for a category or categories of activity. The department may, as a condition of the award of a grant under this section, require the reporting of information to the department regarding the outcomes of the funded activities.

(4) The department may award grants to eligible applicants meeting the minimum qualifying criteria on a competitive basis, or to

applicants on a noncompetitive basis, or both. Within each category of activity described in subsection (2) of this section, the department must prioritize grant applications that benefit overburdened communities as defined in RCW 70A.02.010 as identified by the department in accordance with RCW 70A.02.050. [2024 c 341 s 201.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 341: "(1) The legislature finds:

(a) Washington is now experiencing the effects of a climate crisis: Hotter summers with record-breaking temperatures, devastating fires, drought conditions, and rising sea levels that erode our coastlines and are causing some communities to move upland;

(b) Methane is a potent greenhouse gas and landfills are documented by the United States environmental protection agency to be the 3rd largest human-made source, with food, yard waste, and other plant-based organic material degrading in landfills to methane;

(c) Food waste is a major issue in the United States and globally, that, according to the food and agriculture organization of the United Nations, unwanted and discarded food squanders resources, including water, land, energy, labor, and capital, estimated that one-third of the food produced in the world for human consumption, about 1,300,000,000 tons, is lost or wasted every year, and the food loss and waste in industrialized countries equates to a value of approximately \$680,000,000,000;

(d) The Harvard University food law and policy clinic has estimated that 40 percent of the food supply in the United States is not eaten and that according to the United States environmental protection agency and the United States department of agriculture, food loss and waste is the single largest component of disposed municipal solid waste in the United States;

(e) In 2015, that the administrator of the United States environmental protection agency and the secretary of the United States department of agriculture announced a national goal of reducing food waste by 50 percent by the year 2030. In 2019, Washington established the same goal in RCW 70A.205.715;

(f) Compost and other products of organic material management facilities have beneficial applications and can improve soil health, water quality, and other environmental outcomes. However, in order for the products of organic material management facilities to lead to improved environmental outcomes and for the economics of the operations of these facilities to pencil out, it is important that inbound sources of organic material waste are free of plastic contamination, pesticides, and other materials that will reduce compost quality; and

(g) Farmers, processors, retailers, and food banks in Washington are leaders in addressing this issue, and in 2022, with the enactment of chapter 180, Laws of 2022 (Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 1799), Washington took significant steps towards the improvement of organic material management systems.

(2) It is the legislature's intent to provide additional tools and financial resources to build on this progress in coming years by:

(a) Creating a variety of grant programs to support food waste reduction, food rescue, and other organic material management system improvements, including grants to support the implementation of new policy requirements related to organic material management;

(b) Amending solid waste management requirements in support of improved organic material management outcomes, including through the

statewide standardization of colors and labels for organic, recycling, and garbage bins, and amending the organic material management service requirements in local jurisdictions and that apply to businesses;

(c) Making changes to product degradability labeling requirements; and

(d) Continuing to discuss how to maximize donations of food from generators of unwanted edible food.

(3) It is the legislature's intent for the following management option preferences to apply to the management of food under this act, including the provisions of law being amended by this act, in order of most preferred to least preferred:

(a) Prevents wasted food;

(b) Donates or upcycles food;

(c) Feeds animals or leaves food unharvested;

(d) Composts or anaerobically digests materials with beneficial use of the compost, digestate, or biosolids;

(e) Anaerobically digests materials with the disposal of digestate or biosolids, or applies material to the land; and

(f) Sends materials down the drain, to landfills, or incinerates material, with or without accompanying energy recovery." [2024 c 341 s 101.]

RCW 70A.207.050 Grant programs—Eligible recipients. (1) The department, through the center, must develop and administer grant programs to support the implementation of the requirements of chapter 341, Laws of 2024 and chapter 180, Laws of 2022, with priority given to grants that support the implementation of RCW 70A.205.540 and 70A.205.545. Eligible recipients of grants under this section may include businesses that are subject to organic material management requirements, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes and federally recognized Indian tribal government entities, nonprofit organizations, or organic material management facilities. Eligible expenses by grant recipients include education, outreach, technical assistance, indoor and outdoor infrastructure, transportation and processing infrastructure, and enforcement costs.

(2) The department may not require, as a condition of financial assistance under this section, that matching funds be made available by a local government recipient. The department must provide assistance to each local government that demonstrates eligibility for grant assistance under this section. [2024 c 341 s 202.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 341: See note following RCW 70A.207.040.