

RCW 43.394.010 Creation—Membership. (1) The interagency clean energy siting coordinating council is created. The coordinating council is cochaired by the department of commerce and the department of ecology with participation from the following:

- (a) The office of the governor;
- (b) The energy facility site evaluation council;
- (c) The department of fish and wildlife;
- (d) The department of agriculture;
- (e) The governor's office of Indian affairs;
- (f) The department of archaeology and historic preservation;
- (g) The department of natural resources;
- (h) The department of transportation;
- (i) The utilities and transportation commission;
- (j) The governor's office for regulatory innovation and assistance;
- (k) Staff from the environmental justice council; and
- (l) Other state and federal agencies invited by the department of commerce and the department of ecology with key roles in siting clean energy to participate on an ongoing or ad hoc basis.

(2) The department of commerce and department of ecology shall assign staff in each agency to lead the coordinating council's work and provide ongoing updates to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature, including those with jurisdiction over the environment, energy, or economic development policy.

(3) For purposes of this section and RCW 43.394.020, "coordinating council" means the interagency clean energy siting coordinating council created in this section. [2023 c 230 § 101.]

Findings—Intent—2023 c 230: "(1) The legislature finds that efficient and effective siting and permitting of new clean energy projects throughout Washington is necessary to: Fight climate change and achieve the state's greenhouse gas emission limits; improve air quality; grow family-wage clean energy jobs and innovative clean energy businesses that provide economic benefits across the state; and make available secure domestic sources of the clean energy products needed to transition off fossil fuels.

(2) The legislature intends to: Enable more efficient and effective siting and permitting of clean energy projects with policies and investments that protect the environment, overburdened communities, and tribal rights, interests, and resources, including cultural resources; bring benefits to the communities that host clean energy projects; and facilitate the rapid transition to clean energy that is required to avoid the worst impacts of climate change on Washington's people and places. There is no single solution for improved siting and permitting processes. Rather, a variety of efforts and investments will help bring together state, local, tribal, and federal governments, communities, workers, clean energy project developers, and others to succeed in this essential task. The legislature intends to make biennial appropriations to support tribal review of clean energy project proposals, permit applications, and environmental reviews, as well as tribal participation in up-front planning for clean energy projects, such as nonproject environmental impact statements for clean energy projects as described in this act.

(3) Efficient and effective siting and permitting will benefit from early and meaningful community and tribal engagement, and from up-front planning including identification of areas of higher and

lower levels of impact, and nonproject environmental review that identifies measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate project impacts.

(4) Incorporating the principles and strategies identified in subsections (1), (2), and (3) of this section, the legislature intends to invest in, facilitate, and require better coordinated, faster environmental review and permitting decisions by state and local governments.

(5) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to support efficient, effective siting and permitting of clean energy projects through a variety of interventions, including:

(a) Establishing an interagency clean energy siting coordinating council to improve siting and permitting of clean energy projects;

(b) Creating a designation for clean energy projects of statewide significance;

(c) Creating a fully coordinated permit process for clean energy projects;

(d) Improving processes for review of clean energy projects under the state environmental policy act;

(e) Requiring preparation of separate nonproject environmental impact statements for green electrolytic and renewable hydrogen projects and colocated battery energy storage facilities, onshore utility-scale wind energy projects and colocated battery energy storage facilities, and for solar energy projects and colocated battery energy storage facilities, with the goal of preparing these nonproject reviews by June 30, 2025; and

(f) Requiring the Washington State University energy program to complete by June 30, 2025, a siting information process for pumped storage projects in Washington." [2023 c 230 § 1.]