

RCW 70A.65.270 Natural climate solutions account. (1) The natural climate solutions account is created in the state treasury. All moneys directed to the account from the climate investment account created in RCW 70A.65.250 must be deposited in the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Moneys in the account are intended to increase the resilience of the state's waters, forests, and other vital ecosystems to the impacts of climate change, conserve working forestlands at risk of conversion, and increase their carbon pollution reduction capacity through sequestration, storage, and overall system integrity. Moneys in the account must be spent in a manner that is consistent with existing and future assessments of climate risks and resilience from the scientific community and expressed concerns of and impacts to overburdened communities.

(2) Moneys in the account may be allocated for the following purposes:

(a) Clean water investments that improve resilience from climate impacts. Funding under this subsection (2)(a) must be used to:

(i) Restore and protect estuaries, fisheries, and marine shoreline habitats and prepare for sea level rise including, but not limited to, making fish passage correction investments such as those identified in the cost-share barrier removal program for small forestland owners created in RCW 76.13.150 and those that are considered by the fish passage barrier removal board created in RCW 77.95.160;

(ii) Increase carbon storage in the ocean or aquatic and coastal ecosystems;

(iii) Increase the ability to remediate and adapt to the impacts of ocean acidification;

(iv) Reduce flood risk and restore natural floodplain ecological function;

(v) Increase the sustainable supply of water and improve aquatic habitat, including groundwater mapping and modeling;

(vi) Improve infrastructure treating stormwater from previously developed areas within an urban growth boundary designated under chapter 36.70A RCW, with a preference given to projects that use green stormwater infrastructure;

(vii) Either preserve or increase, or both, carbon sequestration and storage benefits in forests, forested wetlands, agricultural soils, tidally influenced agricultural or grazing lands, or freshwater, saltwater, or brackish aquatic lands; or

(viii) Either preserve or establish, or both, carbon sequestration by protecting or planting trees in marine shorelines and freshwater riparian areas sufficient to promote climate resilience, protect cold water fisheries, and achieve water quality standards;

(b) Healthy forest investments to improve resilience from climate impacts. Funding under this subsection (2)(b) must be used for projects and activities that will:

(i) Increase forest and community resilience to wildfire in the face of increased seasonal temperatures and drought;

(ii) Improve forest health and reduce vulnerability to changes in hydrology, insect infestation, and other impacts of climate change; or

(iii) Prevent emissions by preserving natural and working lands from the threat of conversion to development or loss of critical habitat, through actions that include, but are not limited to, the creation of new conservation lands, community forests, or increased support to small forestland owners through assistance programs including, but not limited to, the forest riparian easement program

and the family forest fish passage program. It is the intent of the legislature that not less than \$10,000,000 be expended each biennium for the forestry riparian easement program created in chapter 76.13 RCW or for riparian easement projects funded under the agricultural conservation easements program established under RCW 89.08.530, or similar riparian enhancement programs.

(3) Moneys in the account may not be used for projects that would violate tribal treaty rights or result in significant long-term damage to critical habitat or ecological functions. Investments from this account must result in long-term environmental benefits and increased resilience to the impacts of climate change. [2021 c 316 § 30.]