

RCW 70A.535.030 Requirements for rules adopted under RCW

70A.535.025. The rules adopted by the department to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions per unit of fuel energy specified in RCW 70A.535.025 must include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Standards for greenhouse gas emissions attributable to the transportation fuels throughout their life cycles, including but not limited to emissions from the production, storage, transportation, and combustion of transportation fuels and from changes in land use associated with transportation fuels and any permanent greenhouse gas sequestration activities.

(a) The rules adopted by the department under this subsection (1) may:

(i) Include provisions to address the efficiency of a fuel as used in a powertrain as compared to a reference fuel;

(ii) Consider carbon intensity calculations for transportation fuels developed by national laboratories or used by similar programs in other states; and

(iii) Consider changes in land use and any permanent greenhouse gas sequestration activities associated with the production of any type of transportation fuel.

(b) The rules adopted by the department under this subsection (1) must:

(i) Neutrally consider the life-cycle emissions associated with transportation fuels with respect to the political jurisdiction in which the fuels originated and may not discriminate against fuels on the basis of having originated in another state or jurisdiction. Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prohibit inclusion or assessment of emissions related to fuel production, storage, transportation, or combustion or associated changes in land use in determining the carbon intensity of a fuel;

(ii) Measure greenhouse gas emissions associated with electricity and hydrogen based on a mix of generation resources specific to each electric utility participating in the clean fuels program. The department may apply an asset-controlling supplier emission factor certified or approved by a similar program to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation fuels in another state;

(iii) Include mechanisms for certifying electricity that has a carbon intensity of zero. This electricity must include, at minimum, electricity:

(A) For which a renewable energy credit or other environmental attribute has been retired or used; and

(B) Produced using a zero emission resource including, but not limited to, solar, wind, geothermal, or the industrial combustion of biomass consistent with RCW 70A.45.020(3), that is directly supplied as a transportation fuel by the generator of the electricity to a metered customer for electric vehicle charging or refueling;

(iv) Allow the generation of credits associated with electricity with a carbon intensity lower than that of standard adopted by the department. The department may not require electricity to have a carbon intensity of zero in order to be eligible to generate credits from use as a transportation fuel; and

(v) Include procedures for setting and adjusting the amounts of greenhouse gas emissions per unit of fuel energy that is assigned to transportation fuels under this subsection.

(c) If the department determines that it is necessary for purposes of accurately measuring greenhouse gas emissions associated

with transportation fuels, the department may require transportation fuel suppliers to submit data or information to be used for purposes of calculating greenhouse gas emissions that is different from or additional to the greenhouse gas emissions data reported under *RCW 70A.15.2200(5)(a)(iii).

(d) If the department determines that it is necessary for purposes of accurately measuring greenhouse gas emissions associated with electricity supplied to retail customers or hydrogen production facilities by an electric utility, the department may require electric utilities participating in the clean fuels program to submit data or information to be used for purposes of calculating greenhouse gas emissions that is different from or additional to the fuel mix disclosure information submitted under chapter 19.29A RCW. To the extent practicable, rules adopted by the department may allow data requested of utilities to be submitted in a form and manner consistent with other required state or federal data submissions;

(2) Provisions allowing for the achievement of limits on the greenhouse gas emissions intensity of transportation fuels in RCW 70A.535.025 to be achieved by any combination of credit generating activities capable of meeting such standards. Where such provisions would not produce results counter to the emission reduction goals of the program or prove administratively burdensome for the department, the rules should provide each participant in the clean fuels program with the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate carbon intensity values taking into account both emissions from production facilities and elsewhere in the production cycle, including changes in land use and permanent greenhouse gas sequestration activities;

(3)(a) Methods for assigning compliance obligations and methods for tracking tradable credits. The department may assign the generation of a credit when a fuel with associated life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions that are lower than the applicable per-unit standard adopted by the department under RCW 70A.535.025 is produced, imported, or dispensed for use in Washington, or when specified activities are undertaken that support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation in Washington;

(b) Mechanisms that allow credits to be traded and to be banked for future compliance periods; and

(c) Procedures for verifying the validity of credits and deficits generated under the clean fuels program;

(4) Mechanisms to elect to participate in the clean fuels program for persons associated with the supply chains of transportation fuels that are eligible to generate credits consistent with subsection (3) of this section, including producers, importers, distributors, users, or retailers of such fuels, and electric vehicle manufacturers;

(5) Mechanisms for persons associated with the supply chains of transportation fuels that are used for purposes that are exempt from the clean fuels program compliance obligations including, but not limited to, fuels used by aircraft, vessels, railroad locomotives, and other exempt fuels specified in RCW 70A.535.040, to elect to participate in the clean fuels program by earning credits for the production, import, distribution, use, or retail of exempt fuels with associated life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions lower than the per-unit standard established in RCW 70A.535.025;

(6) Mechanisms that allow for the assignment of credits to an electric utility for electricity used within its utility service area, at minimum, for residential electric vehicle charging or fueling;

(7) Cost containment mechanisms.

(a) Cost containment mechanisms must include the credit clearance market specified in subsection (8) of this section and may also include, but are not limited to:

(i) Procedures similar to the credit clearance market required in subsection (8) of this section that provide a means of compliance with the clean fuels program requirements in the event that a regulated person has not been able to acquire sufficient volumes of credits at the end of a compliance period; or

(ii) Similar procedures that ensure that credit prices do not significantly exceed credit prices in other jurisdictions that have adopted similar programs to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels.

(b) Any cost containment mechanisms must be designed to provide financial disincentive for regulated persons to rely on the cost containment mechanism for purposes of program compliance instead of seeking to generate or acquire sufficient credits under the program.

(c) The department shall harmonize the program's cost containment mechanisms with the cost containment rules in the states specified in RCW 70A.535.060(1).

(d) The department shall consider mechanisms such as the establishment of a credit price cap or other alternative cost containment measures if deemed necessary to harmonize market credit costs with those in the states specified in RCW 70A.535.060(1);

(8) (a) (i) A credit clearance market for any compliance period in which at least one regulated party reports that the regulated party has a net deficit balance at the end of the compliance period, after retirement of all credits held by the regulated party, that is greater than a small deficit. A regulated party described by this subsection is required to participate in the credit clearance market.

(ii) If a regulated party has a small deficit at the end of a compliance period, the regulated party shall notify the department that it will achieve compliance with the clean fuels program during the compliance period by either: (A) Participating in a credit clearance market; or (B) carrying forward the small deficit.

(b) For the purposes of administering a credit clearance market required by this section, the department shall:

(i) Allow any regulated party, credit generator, or credit aggregator that holds excess credits at the end of the compliance period to voluntarily participate in the credit clearance market as a seller by pledging a specified number of credits for sale in the market;

(ii) Require each regulated party participating in the credit clearance market as purchaser of credits to:

(A) Have retired all credits in the regulated party's possession prior to participating in the credit clearance market; and

(B) Purchase the specified number of the total pledged credits that the department has determined are that regulated party's pro rata share of the pledged credits;

(iii) Require all sellers to:

(A) Agree to sell pledged credits at a price no higher than a maximum price for credits;

(B) Accept all offers to purchase pledged credits at the maximum price for credits; and

(C) Agree to withhold any pledged credits from sale in any transaction outside of the credit clearance market until the end of the credit clearance market, or if no credit clearance market is held

in a given year, then until the date on which the department announces it will not be held.

(c) (i) The department shall set a maximum price for credits in a credit clearance market, consistent with states that have adopted similar clean fuels programs, not to exceed \$200 in 2018 dollars for 2023.

(ii) For 2024 and subsequent years, the maximum price may exceed \$200 in 2018 dollars, but only to the extent that a greater maximum price for credits is necessary to annually adjust for inflation, beginning on January 1, 2024, pursuant to the increase, if any, from the preceding calendar year in the consumer price index for all urban consumers, west region (all items), as published by the bureau of labor statistics of the United States department of labor.

(d) A regulated party that has a net deficit balance after the close of a credit clearance market:

(i) Must carry over the remaining deficits into the next compliance period; and

(ii) May not be subject to interest greater than five percent, penalties, or assertions of noncompliance that accrue based on the carryover of deficits under this subsection.

(e) If a regulated party has been required under (a) of this subsection to participate as a purchaser in two consecutive credit clearance markets and continues to have a net deficit balance after the close of the second consecutive credit clearance market, the department shall complete, no later than two months after the close of the second credit clearance market, an analysis of the root cause of an inability of the regulated party to retire the remaining deficits. The department may recommend and implement any remedy that the department determines is necessary to address the root cause identified in the analysis including, but not limited to, issuing a deferral, provided that the remedy implemented does not:

(i) Require a regulated party to purchase credits for an amount that exceeds the maximum price for credits in the most recent credit clearance market; or

(ii) Compel a person to sell credits.

(f) If credits sold in a credit clearance market are subsequently invalidated as a result of fraud or any other form of noncompliance on the part of the generator of the credit, the department may not pursue civil penalties against, or require credit replacement by, the regulated party that purchased the credits unless the regulated party was a party to the fraud or other form of noncompliance.

(g) The department may not disclose the deficit balances or pro rata share purchase requirements of a regulated party that participates in the credit clearance market;

(9) Authority for the department to designate an entity to aggregate and use unclaimed credits associated with persons that elect not to participate in the clean fuels program under subsection (4) of this section. [2022 c 182 § 410; 2021 c 317 § 4.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 70A.15.2200 was amended by 2021 c 316 § 33, deleting subsection (5) (a) (iii) entirely.

Effective date—2022 c 182 §§ 313, 408-414, and 421: See note following RCW 82.21.030.

Intent—2022 c 182: See note following RCW 70A.65.240.

Severability—2021 c 317: See note following RCW 70A.535.005.