

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5247

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government & Elections, January 13, 2023
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 1, 2023

Title: An act relating to developing opportunities for service and workforce programs to support climate-ready communities.

Brief Description: Developing opportunities for service and workforce programs to support climate-ready communities.

Sponsors: Senators Nobles, Saldaña, Cleveland, Hunt, Kuderer, Lias, Lovelett, Lovick, Nguyen, Randall, Rolfes, Shewmake, Stanford, Valdez, Wellman and Wilson, C.; by request of Office of the Governor.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 1/13/23 [w/oRec-HEWD].
Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/18/23, 2/01/23 [DP-WM, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Washington Climate Corps Network to provide climate-related service opportunities for young adults and veterans.
- Establishes a Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee to review workforce and business issues within the clean energy technology sector and make recommendations to prevent workforce displacement and support job creation.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Lias.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Hawkins.

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: Serve Washington. Serve Washington, formerly the Washington Commission for National and Community Service, was established under Governor Executive Order 16-08 to:

- comply with federal requirements pertaining to state commissions on national and community service;
- seek additional sources of non-federal funds, especially private funds, to meet matching requirements and build upon existing service initiatives;
- provide recommendations to the Governor pertaining to legislative or policy initiatives that promote the ethic of service;
- identify policies or practices that lead to the expansion of national service opportunities in Washington, and support federal programs and efforts that expand national service; and
- provide the leadership and vision to make service a part of the lives of all Washingtonians.

Serve Washington is made up of 20 members appointed by the Governor for three-year terms. The Office of Financial Management administers federal grants and provides state resources for staffing and supporting Serve Washington.

Green Economy Jobs Growth Initiative. In 2008, the Legislature established the Green Economy Jobs Growth Initiative with a goal of increasing the number of clean energy jobs in the state to 25,000 by 2020. Specific actions related to the green economy were to be carried out by a number of state agencies.

Evergreen Jobs Act. In 2009, the Legislature established the Evergreen Jobs Initiative with a goal of creating 15,000 new green economy jobs by 2020 and other goals related to employment, job training, investment, and exports. Under that act, the Employment Security Department is required to conduct and update labor market research on the green economy. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is required to create and pilot green industry skill panels to conduct labor market and industry analyses and recommend strategies to meet the recruitment and training needs of the green economy workforce.

Summary of Bill: Washington Climate Corps Network. The Washington Climate Corps Network is established to provide climate-related service opportunities for young adults and veterans. The program shall be administered by Serve Washington. Serve Washington is responsible for:

- growing climate-related opportunities, including those identified by the Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee (advisory committee);

- establishing common requirements for participation in service programs;
- developing and administering a service-learning program that provides training to climate corps service members; and
- administering grants to support and broaden access to climate-related service programs.

Serve Washington may provide grants to support equitable access to participation in the Washington Climate Corps Network, reduce the cost of programs to host service members, and support the development of new programs.

The Office of Financial Management, in consultation with Serve Washington, may adopt rules for administering the Washington Climate Corps Network.

Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (board) must establish an advisory committee. The advisory committee must be co-chaired by a member representing business and a member representing workers. The advisory committee's responsibilities include:

- reviewing workforce and business issues in the energy sector and the impacts of the energy transition to dependent sectors; and
- recommending strategies to prevent workforce displacement and to support job creation in clean energy technology.

Each biennium the advisory committee, in consultation with the Department of Commerce and the Employment Security Department, must evaluate the workforce impact of Washington's climate policies. This includes an examination of labor market trends, wages and benefits in the clean energy technology sector, demographics of traditional and clean energy technology sectors, inventory of skills needed in clean energy technology jobs; and key challenges.

Each biennium, the board must develop recommendations for necessary steps to support workforce training required for clean energy technologies. The board must conduct a study of the feasibility of a transition to retirement program to preserve income, medical, and retirement benefits for workers close to retirement who face job loss or transition because of clean energy technology sector changes.

Beginning November 1, 2023, and at least once every two years, the board must report to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature, recommendations on how the state can support worker and employer needs in response to the changing workforce requirements for clean energy technology. The report must include the recommendations of the advisory committee and the board's recommendations to support workforce training for the clean energy technology sector.

The Green Economy Jobs Growth Initiative requirement that ESD conduct labor market research on the green economy, and pilot green industry skill panels are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill tackles important workforce issues and aids in the fight against the climate crisis. It builds climate ready and climate resilient communities through increased service opportunities and clean energy workforce development. This bill creates the Washington Climate Corps, a network of climate related service programs for young adults and veterans which will support equity centered service opportunities and fill critical gaps in the existing AmeriCorps landscape. It encourages more services on tribal lands and in overburdened communities. This bill will create the Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee which will lay the groundwork for building the clean energy workforce of the future in partnership with our labor groups. Communities of color deserve an opportunity at the creation of new green jobs which will contribute to the conservation of land, jobs that pay a dignified wage, and provide opportunities for growth. This bill will leverage federal and state funding to address critical gaps in service opportunities.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator T'wina Nobles, Prime Sponsor; Guillermo Rogel, Front and Centered; Amber Martin-Jahn, Serve Washington; Carrie Sessions; Maud Daudon, Career Connect Washington; Paul Williams, The Suquamish Tribe; Nova Gattman, Workforce Board; Larry Brown, Co-Chair, Workforce Board; Erin Frasier, Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council; Bridget Talebi, WA State Department of Ecology; Brian Considine, Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.