
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2654

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By House Environment (originally sponsored by Representatives Seaquist and Pollet)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/14.

1 AN ACT Relating to codifying the existence of the climate impacts
2 group without making modifications to its current mission; and adding
3 a new chapter to Title 28B RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds the following:

6 (a) Climatic conditions affect the property, economy, natural
7 resources, environment, and the lives of the citizens of the state of
8 Washington, including agriculture, wine making, tourism, skiing,
9 recreational and commercial fishing, forestry, hydropower generation,
10 public health and safety, and the durability and performance of
11 infrastructure and the built environment, and are therefore of
12 importance to the state's workers, consumers, businesses, industries,
13 and residents.

14 (b) Washington has experienced ongoing variations in climate and
15 extreme weather events that cause droughts and floods, and affect
16 natural hazards, resource availability, public safety, and diverse
17 economic sectors. These variations and associated impacts are expected
18 to continue in the future.

1 (c) In addition to ongoing climate variability, climate change,
2 regardless of its genesis, is expected to have significant impacts in
3 the Pacific Northwest region in the near and long-term future
4 including, among other things: Increased temperatures, declining
5 snowpack, more frequent heavy rainfall and flooding, receding glaciers,
6 changes in the timing of streamflows and water supply and demand,
7 extreme or unusual weather events, rising sea levels, increased risks
8 to public health, declining salmon populations, increased drought, risk
9 of forest fires and forest insect outbreaks, altered reliability of
10 transportation interconnections and durability and performance of
11 infrastructure and the built environment.

12 (d) There is a need to continue to gather and analyze information
13 related to climate risk reduction that will help guide prudent steps
14 for avoiding, reducing, and responding to climate impacts, protecting
15 our communities, and assisting in maximizing public and private
16 infrastructure investments.

17 (e) The University of Washington climate impacts group has
18 contributed to much of the knowledge base and provides much of the
19 state's existing capacity to identify and assess potential climate
20 risks and, since 1995, has provided Washington and the region with
21 impartial and actionable research, data, tools, and technical advice to
22 support assessment and prioritization of climate risks and to identify
23 and fill knowledge gaps.

24 (f) By combining detailed knowledge of regional information needs
25 with the unique scientific and computing capacity in the state's
26 university systems, the University of Washington climate impacts group
27 has had many noteworthy accomplishments, such as:

28 (i) Developing the first comprehensive assessment of climate
29 impacts on the state of Washington and identifying climate change
30 consequences of practical concern;

31 (ii) Developing and publicly providing a comprehensive suite of
32 data showing past and potential future climate and hydrologic
33 conditions for locations across the state to support climate risk
34 assessment and long-range planning that has been used in long-range
35 planning efforts by entities such as the United States bureau of
36 reclamation, the United States army corps of engineers, Bonneville
37 power administration, and Seattle city light;

1 (iii) Providing data, tools, and technical guidance to support
2 climate risk assessment and adaptation activities by state agencies,
3 including the departments of ecology, natural resources, fish and
4 wildlife, transportation, and health, along with the office of the
5 attorney general and numerous local, tribal, and federal entities
6 within the region; and

7 (iv) Evaluating climate-related issues using methods and approaches
8 that transcend the expertise and mission of the individual departments,
9 colleges, centers, and institutes of the University of Washington by
10 providing the structure and continuity for the integrated,
11 interdisciplinary approach needed to address these complex issues.

12 (2) It is the intent of the legislature for the climate impacts
13 group to continue to provide the structure and continuity needed for
14 effective climate risk reduction in Washington state by continuing to
15 draw contributions from the associated departments and colleges of the
16 University of Washington into a more consolidated, collaborative,
17 interdisciplinary, and integrated process that is responsive to the
18 critical climate risks and opportunities facing sectors of importance
19 to the state of Washington and to continue to work with the various
20 interests concerned with these and other climate sensitive sectors of
21 the state, including the legislature, state and federal governments,
22 environmental organizations, local communities, business and industry,
23 and tribes, to improve these entities' ability to thrive in the context
24 of ongoing climate variability and change. It is not the intent of the
25 legislature to change or affect in any way the ongoing work and mission
26 of the climate impacts group.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The climate impacts group may be
28 administratively housed by the University of Washington, consistent
29 with this chapter, and is subject to the authority of the board of
30 regents of the university. Nothing in this section requires the
31 University of Washington to maintain the climate impacts group or
32 provide direct financial support to the climate impacts group.

33 (2) The climate impacts group must be administered by the director
34 of the group as appointed by the dean of the college of the environment
35 at the University of Washington.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The climate impacts group should strive
2 to serve as a centralized, interdisciplinary resource for the state of
3 Washington to study and assist in the understanding of the effects and
4 impacts of natural climate variability and global and regional climate
5 change by focusing on the intersection of climate science and public
6 policy and resource management.

7 (2) Examples of the role of the climate impacts group may include,
8 but are not limited to:

9 (a) Pursuing coordinated research and education related to climate
10 risks and opportunities for various sectors in Washington;

11 (b) Developing, delivering, and supporting the use of relevant
12 scientific and technical information about climate impacts on
13 Washington's ecology, economy, and society, and the scientific
14 implications of alternative response options;

15 (c) Serving as a credible and expert source of climate information
16 for state and local decision makers and agencies working on drought,
17 flooding, forest fires, hazard mitigation, and other climate-related
18 issues;

19 (d) Collaborating with and leveraging efforts of other existing
20 climate-related resources at the federal, state, and local level;

21 (e) Conducting and reporting on studies of climate-related events
22 of significant socioeconomic importance to the state;

23 (f) Supporting state agencies and local governments in developing
24 strategies to prepare for, and to respond to, the effects of climate
25 variability and change on natural and human systems; and

26 (g) Tracking and evaluating ongoing climate adaptation efforts such
27 as:

28 (i) Economic, environmental, health, and social assessments of
29 climate impacts relevant to Washington and the Pacific Northwest; and

30 (ii) Local and regional efforts to prepare for the effects of a
31 changing climate.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The climate impacts group may maintain
33 areas of focus related to the purposes of this chapter.

34 (2) Examples of appropriate areas of focus may include, but are not
35 limited to:

36 (a) Water resources, natural and managed water supply, water

1 demand, water shortages, and extreme water-related events such as
2 droughts and floods;

3 (b) The potential impacts of sea level rise and the implications of
4 alternative approaches for addressing these impacts on the state's
5 shoreline areas, including potential increases in storm surge and
6 coastal flooding, increased erosion, and loss of habitat and ecosystem
7 function; and

8 (c) Evaluation of the economic, ecological, and societal dimensions
9 of climate risks, opportunities, and response strategies in both the
10 rural and urban environments, and for sectors including:

11 (i) Water and energy demand and supplies;

12 (ii) Infrastructure, transportation, health, ecology, natural
13 resources, and agricultural systems; and

14 (iii) Natural and managed ecosystems, including forest ecosystems
15 and wildfire risk, and terrestrial, aquatic, and marine ecosystems and
16 species.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The climate impacts group must, when
18 appropriate to achieving the purposes of this chapter, cooperate and
19 coordinate with other entities to fulfill its objectives.

20 (2) Examples of entities that the climate impacts group should
21 cooperate and coordinate with may include, but are not limited to:

22 (a) Other universities;

23 (b) Local, state, and federal governments;

24 (c) Public advocacy organizations;

25 (d) Tribal agencies, organizations, and governments; and

26 (e) Domestic or foreign business institutions.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** State agencies and local governments are
28 encouraged to contract with the climate impacts group to fulfill agency
29 needs regarding the collection, storage, integration, analysis,
30 dissemination, interpretation, application, and monitoring of climate
31 change information, research, and training.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) The results of any research funded by
33 the state that is undertaken by the climate impacts group must be
34 available to all industries and citizens of the state of Washington and
35 the climate impacts group is authorized to disseminate this information

1 along with information relating to any individuals housed outside of
2 the climate impacts group who contributed to the development of the
3 research. Information related to any contributors must include the
4 identification of the contributor's employing organization and the
5 credentials, area of expertise, and professional background of each
6 contributor.

7 (2) Information disseminated under this section must identify any
8 sources of information reviewed and relied upon by the climate impacts
9 group in the course of preparing the information. Peer-reviewed
10 literature, if applicable, must be identified, as well as any
11 scientific literature or other sources of information used.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** (1) The climate impacts group may solicit
13 gifts, grants, conveyances, bequests, and devices, including both real
14 or personal property, in trust or otherwise, to be directed to the
15 climate impacts group for carrying out the objectives of the climate
16 impacts group as provided in this chapter.

17 (2) In addition to section 6 of this act, the climate impacts group
18 may solicit contracts for work, financial and in-kind contributions,
19 and support from private industries, interest groups, federal, state,
20 and tribal sources, and other sources deemed appropriate by the
21 director of the climate impacts group.

22 (3) The climate impacts group may utilize separately appropriated
23 funds of the University of Washington for the climate impacts group
24 operations and activities.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** (1) The director of the climate impacts
26 group may, at the discretion of the director, appoint and maintain a
27 stakeholder advisory committee to advise the director on areas of focus
28 for the climate impacts group that are consistent with the purposes of
29 this chapter.

30 (2) If activated, the membership of the stakeholder advisory
31 committee must represent, to the extent possible, the various interests
32 concerned with the climate impacts group, including state and federal
33 agencies, tribal governments, conservation and environmental
34 organizations, urban entities, rural communities, industry, and
35 business.

1 (3) Members of the stakeholder advisory committee may not receive
2 any salary or other compensation for service on the advisory committee.
3 However, each member may be compensated, at the discretion of the
4 director of the climate impacts group, for each day in actual
5 attendance at or traveling to and from meetings of the advisory
6 committee in accordance with RCW 43.03.220, together with travel
7 expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** Sections 1 through 9 of this act constitute
9 a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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