
SENATE BILL 5567

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Nobles, Slatter, Chapman, and Warnick

1 AN ACT Relating to secondary training for careers in natural
2 resources and conservation; and adding new sections to chapter
3 28A.700 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that natural
6 resource and conservation jobs are a critical component to Washington
7 state's climate resilience and to rural economic vitality.

8 (2) The legislature further finds that young people ages 14 to 17
9 have limited equitable pathways into natural resource and
10 conservation fields. Most job opportunities for youth require them to
11 choose between gaining high school graduation credit, skill building,
12 or a paid position.

13 (3) The legislature further finds that a connection to nature is
14 strongly linked to positive mental and physical health outcomes. The
15 youth in sustainable natural resource systems, or YESS programs, is
16 an example of modern education for all children. This approach to
17 education meets the learning needs of historically marginalized
18 youth. Historic investments have been made in the health arena to
19 address mental health problems, and this program increases protective
20 factors for youth experiencing adverse childhood experiences.

1 (4) The legislature further finds that many students in
2 Washington are not aware of the opportunities for family wage careers
3 in the natural resource and conservation sectors.

4 (5) The legislature further finds that, as defined in the
5 governor's office report "education for a green economy," the state
6 needs to advocate for critical-demand jobs in addition to high-demand
7 jobs.

8 (6) It is the intent of the legislature to fund a career
9 preparation program designed to continue and expand the operations of
10 an existing program that engages youth in sustainable natural
11 resource systems.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts
13 appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the
14 superintendent of public instruction shall select a private sector,
15 nonprofit partner to continue and expand the operations of an
16 existing program designed to engage youth in sustainable natural
17 resource systems, consistent with section 3 of this act.

18 (2) The private sector, nonprofit partner selected to implement
19 the program must satisfy the following criteria:

20 (a) Be registered under section 501(c)(3) of the internal revenue
21 code and have 20 years or more experience working with the education
22 and natural resource sectors in Washington;

23 (b) Demonstrate the successful past completion of programs
24 consistent with section 3 of this act, focusing on either restoration
25 ecology or forest management, at a minimum of seven school districts;

26 (c) Have successfully completed natural resource grants as a
27 program builder for career connect Washington under chapter 28C.30
28 RCW, and be partnering with the career connect Washington sector lead
29 for agriculture and natural resources;

30 (d) Have successfully submitted career and technical education
31 frameworks to the superintendent of public instruction for review
32 under RCW 28A.700.010;

33 (e) Be prepared to regularly conduct surveys of natural resource
34 and conservation employers, by sector, to identify workforce needs
35 and career connected learning opportunities;

36 (f) Be able to work with the office of the superintendent of
37 public instruction to collect data on program completion rates,
38 graduation rates, and postsecondary outcomes;

1 (g) Demonstrate the ability to enhance the state's investment in
2 the program with a private sector contribution, which may include:
3 Funds, equipment, facilities, faculty, and scholarship or offers of
4 employment for students after the completion of the program;

5 (h) Demonstrate successful recruitment of historically
6 marginalized students and a plan to prioritize schools and districts
7 designated as a "disadvantaged community" by the environmental
8 protection agency's climate justice program or school districts
9 located in communities scoring a seven or higher on the Washington
10 environmental health disparities map under RCW 43.70.815;

11 (i) Be able to administer and submit cost proposals for this
12 program, including: Coordination of courses, an employer survey, a
13 professional learning component for teachers, equipment, and student
14 stipends;

15 (j) Demonstrate the ability to expand the program, with adequate
16 funding and a focus on a career and technical framework that meet the
17 requirements of RCW 28A.700.030, to address topics that contribute to
18 the conservation of natural resources in Washington including, but
19 not limited to: Aquaculture and fisheries, education through outdoor
20 learning, renewable energy, restoration ecology, forest management,
21 urban and community forestry, green stormwater infrastructure, forest
22 fire management, and water resource management; and

23 (k) Coordinate gear libraries with program partners.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The courses offered through the
25 program administered by the private sector, nonprofit partner
26 selected in section 2 of this act must satisfy the following
27 criteria:

28 (a) Target students 14 through 17 years of age; and

29 (b) Use learning based on state standards, including the John
30 McCoy (lulilaš) since time immemorial curriculum as outlined in RCW
31 28A.320.170, environmental and sustainability content outlined in RCW
32 28A.300.444, and natural resource industry competencies.

33 (2) The program structure must be designed as a summer skills
34 center or after-school workforce program of no less than 90 hours,
35 with no less than two-thirds of the program hours dedicated to
36 completing work-integrated learning with designated community
37 partners, that earns participants:

38 (a) High school credits;

1 (b) The possibility of credits with a community and technical
2 college if the student satisfies the partnering college's dual credit
3 requirements; or

4 (c) An industry-recognized credential or document of competency
5 aligned to local employer needs.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) By December after the first and third
7 year of state-funded programming, and in compliance with RCW
8 43.01.036, the office of the superintendent of public instruction
9 shall submit a report to the legislature on the program described in
10 this chapter.

11 (2) The report must:

12 (a) Evaluate and summarize the activities of the program,
13 including the school districts and skill centers involved each school
14 year;

15 (b) Account for the use of all funding; and

16 (c) Provide recommendations for program continuation, expiration,
17 or revision.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act are each
19 added to chapter 28A.700 RCW and codified with the subchapter heading
20 of "secondary training for careers in natural resources and
21 conservation."

--- END ---