

RCW 70A.205.715 Food waste reduction—Goal—Plan—Definitions.

(1) A goal is established for the state to reduce by fifty percent the amount of food waste generated annually by 2030, relative to 2015 levels. A subset of this goal must include a prevention goal to reduce the amount of edible food that is wasted.

(2) The department may estimate 2015 levels of wasted food in Washington using any combination of solid waste reporting data obtained under this chapter and surveys and studies measuring wasted food and food waste in other jurisdictions. For the purposes of measuring progress towards the goal in subsection (1) of this section, the department must adopt standardized metrics and processes for measuring or estimating volumes of wasted food and food waste generated in the state.

(3) By October 1, 2020, the department, in consultation with the department of agriculture and the department of health, must develop and adopt a state wasted food reduction and food waste diversion plan designed to achieve the goal established in subsection (1) of this section.

(a) The wasted food reduction and food waste diversion plan must include strategies, in descending order of priority, to:

(i) Prevent and reduce the wasting of edible food by residents and businesses;

(ii) Help match and support the capacity for edible food that would otherwise be wasted with food banks and other distributors that will ensure the food reaches those who need it; and

(iii) Support productive uses of inedible food materials, including using it for animal feed, energy production through anaerobic digestion, or other commercial uses, and for off-site or on-site management systems including composting, vermicomposting, or other biological systems.

(b) The wasted food reduction and food waste diversion plan must be designed to:

(i) Recommend a regulatory environment that optimizes activities and processes to rescue safe, nutritious, edible food;

(ii) Recommend a funding environment in which stable, predictable resources are provided to wasted food prevention and rescue and food waste recovery activities in such a way as to allow the development of additional capacity and the use of new technologies;

(iii) Avoid placing burdensome regulations on the hunger relief system, and ensure that organizations involved in wasted food prevention and rescue, and food waste recovery, retain discretion to accept or reject donations of food when appropriate;

(iv) Provide state technical support to wasted food prevention and rescue and food waste recovery organizations;

(v) Support the development and distribution of equitable materials to support food waste and wasted food educational and programmatic efforts in K-12 schools, in collaboration with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, and aligned with the Washington state science and social studies learning standards; and

(vi) Facilitate and encourage restaurants and other retail food establishments to safely donate food to food banks and food assistance programs through education and outreach to retail food establishment operators regarding safe food donation opportunities, practices, and benefits.

(c) The wasted food reduction and food waste diversion plan must include suggested best practices that local governments may

incorporate into solid waste management plans developed under RCW 70A.205.040.

(d) The department must solicit feedback from the public and interested stakeholders throughout the process of developing and adopting the wasted food reduction and food waste diversion plan. To assist with its food waste reduction plan development responsibilities, the department may designate a stakeholder advisory panel. If the department designates a stakeholder advisory panel, it must consist of local government health departments, local government solid waste departments, food banks, hunger-focused nonprofit organizations, waste-focused nonprofit organizations, K-12 public education, and food businesses or food business associations.

(e) The department must identify the sources of scientific, economic, or other technical information it relied upon in developing the plan required under this section, including peer-reviewed science.

(f) In conjunction with the development of the wasted food reduction and food waste diversion plan, the department and the departments of agriculture and health must consider recommending changes to state law, including changes to food quality, labeling, and inspection requirements under chapter 69.80 RCW and any changes in laws relating to the donation of food waste or wasted food for animals, in order to achieve the goal established in subsection (1) of this section. Any such recommendations must be explained via a report to the legislature submitted consistent with RCW 43.01.036 by December 1, 2020. Prior to any implementation of the plan, for the activities, programs, or policies in the plan that would impose new obligations on state agencies, local governments, businesses, or citizens, the December 1, 2020, report must outline the plan for making regulatory changes identified in the report. This outline must include the department or the appropriate state agency's plan to make recommendations for statutory or administrative rule changes identified. In combination with any identified statutory or administrative rule changes, the department or the appropriate state agency must include expected cost estimates for both government entities and private persons or businesses to comply with any recommended changes.

(4) In support of the development of the plan in subsection (3) of this section, the department of commerce must contract for an independent evaluation of the state's food waste and wasted food management system.

(5) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) (i) "Food waste" means waste from fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products, fish, shellfish, nuts, seeds, grains, and similar materials that results from the storage, preparation, cooking, handling, selling, or serving of food for human consumption.

(ii) "Food waste" includes, but is not limited to, excess, spoiled, or unusable food and includes inedible parts commonly associated with food preparation such as pits, shells, bones, and peels. "Food waste" does not include dead animals not intended for human consumption or animal excrement.

(b) "Prevention" refers to avoiding the wasting of food in the first place and represents the greatest potential for cost savings and environmental benefits for businesses, governments, and consumers.

(c) "Recovery" refers to processing inedible food waste to extract value from it, through composting, anaerobic digestion, or for use as animal feedstock.

(d) "Rescue" refers to the redistribution of surplus edible food to other users.

(e) "Wasted food" means the edible portion of food waste. [2020 c 20 s 1204; 2019 c 255 s 2. Formerly RCW 70.95.815.]

Finding—Intent—2019 c 255: "(1) The legislature finds that the wasting of food represents a misuse of resources, including the water, land, energy, labor, and capital that go into growing, harvesting, processing, transporting, and retailing food for human consumption. Wasting edible food occurs all along the food production supply chain, and reducing the waste of edible food is a goal that can be achieved only with the collective efforts of growers, processors, distributors, retailers, consumers of food, and food bankers and related charities. Inedible food waste can be managed in ways that reduce negative environmental impacts and provide beneficial results to the land, air, soil, and energy infrastructure. Efforts to reduce the waste of food and expand the diversion of food waste to beneficial end uses will also require the mindful support of government policies that shape the behavior and waste reduction opportunities of each of those participants in the food supply chain.

(2) Every year, American consumers, businesses, and farms spend billions of dollars growing, processing, transporting, and disposing of food that is never eaten. That represents tens of millions of tons of food sent to landfills annually, plus millions of tons more that are discarded or left unharvested on farms. Worldwide, the United Nations food and agriculture organization has estimated that if one-fourth of the food lost or wasted globally could be saved, it would be enough to feed eight hundred seventy million hungry people. Meanwhile, one in eight Americans is food insecure, including one in six children. Recent data from the department of ecology indicate that Washington is not immune to food waste problems, and recent estimates indicate that seventeen percent of all garbage sent to Washington disposal facilities is food waste, including eight percent that is food that was determined to be edible at the time of disposal. In recognition of the widespread benefits that would accrue from reductions in food waste, in 2015, the administrator of the United States environmental protection agency and the secretary of the United States department of agriculture announced a national goal of reducing food waste by fifty percent by 2030. The Pacific Coast collaborative recently agreed to a similar commitment of halving food waste by 2030, including efforts to prevent, rescue, and recover wasted food.

(3) By establishing state wasted food reduction goals and developing a state wasted food reduction strategy, it is the intent of the legislature to continue its national leadership in solid waste reduction efforts by:

(a) Improving efficiencies in the food production and distribution system in order to reduce the cradle to grave greenhouse gas emissions associated with wasted food;

(b) Fighting hunger by more efficiently diverting surplus food to feed hungry individuals and families in need; and

(c) Supporting expansion of management facilities for inedible food waste to improve access and facility performance while reducing the volumes of food that flow through those facilities." [2019 c 255 s 1.]