

RCW 70A.535.120 Emergency deferral of compliance with carbon intensity standard.

(1) The director of the department may issue an order declaring an emergency deferral of compliance with the carbon intensity standard established under RCW 70A.535.025 no later than 15 calendar days after the date the department determines, in consultation with the governor's office and the department of commerce, that:

(a) Extreme and unusual circumstances exist that prevent the distribution of an adequate supply of renewable fuels needed for regulated parties to comply with the clean fuels program taking into consideration all available methods of obtaining sufficient credits to comply with the standard;

(b) The extreme and unusual circumstances are the result of a natural disaster, an act of God, a significant supply chain disruption or production facility equipment failure, or another event that could not reasonably have been foreseen or prevented and not the lack of prudent planning on the part of the suppliers of the fuels to the state; and

(c) It is in the public interest to grant the deferral such as when a deferral is necessary to meet projected temporary shortfalls in the supply of the renewable fuel in the state and that other methods of obtaining compliance credits are unavailable to compensate for the shortage of renewable fuel supply.

(2) If the director of the department makes the determination required under subsection (1) of this section, such a temporary extreme and unusual deferral is permitted only if:

(a) The deferral applies only for the shortest time necessary to address the extreme and unusual circumstances;

(b) The deferral is effective for the shortest practicable time period the director of the department determines necessary to permit the correction of the extreme and unusual circumstances; and

(c) The director has given public notice of a proposed deferral.

(3) An order declaring an emergency deferral under this section must set forth:

(a) The duration of the emergency deferral;

(b) The types of fuel to which the emergency deferral applies;

(c) Which of the following methods the department has selected for deferring compliance with the clean fuels program during the emergency deferral:

(i) Temporarily adjusting the scheduled applicable carbon intensity standard to a standard identified in the order that better reflects the availability of credits during the emergency deferral and requiring regulated parties to comply with the temporary standard;

(ii) Allowing for the carryover of deficits accrued during the emergency deferral into the next compliance period without penalty; or

(iii) Suspending deficit accrual during the emergency deferral period.

(4) An emergency deferral may be terminated prior to the expiration date of the emergency deferral if new information becomes available indicating that the shortage that provided the basis for the emergency deferral has ended. The director of the department shall consult with the department of commerce and the governor's office in making an early termination decision. Termination of an emergency deferral is effective 15 calendar days after the date that the order declaring the termination is adopted.

(5) (a) In addition to the emergency deferral specified in subsection (1) of this section, the department may issue a full or

partial deferral for one calendar quarter of a person's obligation to furnish credits for compliance under RCW 70A.535.030 if it finds that the person is unable to comply with the requirements of this chapter due to reasons beyond the person's reasonable control. The department may initiate a deferral under this subsection at its own discretion or at the request of a person regulated under this chapter. The department may renew issued deferrals. In evaluating whether to issue a deferral under this subsection, the department may consider the results of the fuel supply forecast in RCW 70A.535.100, but is not bound in its decision-making discretion by the results of the forecast.

(b) If the department issues a deferral pursuant to this subsection, the department may:

(i) Direct the person subject to the deferral to file a progress report on achieving full compliance with the requirements of this chapter within an amount of time determined to be reasonable by the department; and

(ii) Direct the person to take specific actions to achieve full compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

(c) The issuance of a deferral under this subsection does not permanently relieve the deferral recipient of the obligation to comply with the requirements of this chapter. [2022 c 182 s 413; 2021 c 317 s 13.]

Effective date—2022 c 182 ss 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.