

RCW 70A.45.005 Findings—Intent. (1) The legislature finds that Washington has long been a national and international leader on energy conservation and environmental stewardship, including air quality protection, renewable energy development and generation, emission standards for fossil-fuel based energy generation, energy efficiency programs, natural resource conservation, sustainable forestry and the production of forest products, vehicle emission standards, and the use of biofuels. Washington is also unique among most states in that in addition to its commitment to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, it has established goals to grow the clean energy sector and reduce the state's expenditures on imported fuels.

(2) The legislature further finds that Washington should continue its leadership on climate change policy by creating accountability for achieving the emission reductions established in RCW 70A.45.020, participating in the design of a regional multisector market-based system to help achieve those emission reductions, assessing other market strategies to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, maintaining and enhancing the state's ability to continue to sequester carbon through natural and working lands and forest products, and ensuring the state has a well trained workforce for our clean energy future.

(3) It is the intent of the legislature that the state will: (a) Limit and reduce emissions of greenhouse gas consistent with the emission reductions established in RCW 70A.45.020; (b) minimize the potential to export pollution, jobs, and economic opportunities; (c) support industry sectors that can act as sequesterers of carbon; and (d) reduce emissions at the lowest cost to Washington's economy, consumers, and businesses.

(4) In the event the state elects to participate in a regional multisector market-based system, it is the intent of the legislature that the system will become effective by January 1, 2012, after authority is provided to the department for its implementation. By acting now, Washington businesses and citizens will have adequate time and opportunities to be well positioned to take advantage of the low carbon economy and to make necessary investments in low carbon technology.

(5) It is also the intent of the legislature that the regional multisector market-based system recognize Washington's unique emissions and sequestration portfolio, including the:

(a) State's hydroelectric system;

(b) Opportunities presented by Washington's abundant forest resources and the associated forest products industry, along with aquatic and agriculture land and the associated industries; and

(c) State's leadership in energy efficiency and the actions it has already taken that have reduced its generation of greenhouse gas emissions and that entities receive appropriate credit for early actions to reduce greenhouse gases.

(6) If any revenues, excluding those from state trust lands, that accrue to the state are created by a market system, they must be used for the purposes established in chapter 70A.65 RCW and to further the state's efforts to achieve the goals established in RCW 70A.45.020, address the impacts of global warming on affected habitats, species, and communities, promote and invest in industry sectors that act as sequesterers of carbon, and increase investment in the clean energy economy particularly for communities and workers that have suffered from heavy job losses and chronic unemployment and underemployment.

[2021 c 316 § 44. Prior: 2020 c 120 § 2; 2020 c 20 § 1397; 2008 c 14 § 1. Formerly RCW 70.235.005.]

Short title—2021 c 316: See RCW 70A.65.900.

Findings—2020 c 120: "(1) The legislature finds that the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) released a report in 2019 entitled "IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems" that provides guidance relating to how natural and working lands can be utilized to assist with a global climate response strategy. In addition, the food and agricultural organization of the United Nations issued a report in 2016 entitled "forestry for a low carbon future" with specific recommendations for integrating forest and wood products in climate change strategies. Recommendations from these reports are critical as Washington develops its own climate response and charts how the state can use its forestland base and vibrant forest products sector as part of its contribution to the global climate response.

(2) The legislature further finds that the 2019 intergovernmental panel on climate change report identifies several measures where sustainable forest management and forest products may be utilized to maintain and enhance carbon sequestration. These include increasing the carbon sequestration potential of forests and forest products by maintaining and expanding the forestland base, reducing emissions from land conversion to nonforest uses, increasing forest resiliency to reduce the risk of carbon releases from disturbances such as wildfire, pest infestation, and disease, and applying sustainable forest management techniques to maintain or enhance forest carbon stocks and forest carbon sinks, including through the transference of carbon to wood products.

(3) The legislature further finds that the food and agricultural organization of the United Nations reports similar recommendations, with a focus on forest management tools that increases the carbon density in forests, increases carbon storage out of the forest in harvested wood products, utilizes wood energy, and suppresses forest disturbances from fire, pests, and disease." [2020 c 120 § 1.]