



Agency Request Legislation: Interagency Climate Resilience Coordinating Council

**An Environmental Justice Assessment (per RCW
70A.02.060)**

By

Jennifer Hennessey

For the

Executive Office

Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington

September 2024, Publication 24-01-008

Contact Information

Executive Office

P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
Phone: 360-407-6000

Website¹: [Washington State Department of Ecology](http://www.ecology.wa.gov)

ADA Accessibility

The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Washington State Policy #188.

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-628-3900 or email at effie.bolinger@ecy.wa.gov. For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341. Visit Ecology's website for more information.

¹ www.ecology.wa.gov/contact

Language Access

Under the state Environmental Justice law (RCW 70A.02), Ecology is required to conduct Environmental Justice Assessments during development of certain significant actions. This Assessment provides information about the potential impacts to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, and strategies to mitigate identified harms and fairly distribute known benefits. For translation, interpretation, or accessibility assistance, please contact Courtney Cecale at courtney.cecale@ecy.wa.gov or (360) 480-6270.

Bajo la ley estatal de Justicia Medioambiental (RCW 70A.02), Ecología está obligada a realizar Evaluaciones de Justicia Medioambiental durante el desarrollo de ciertas medidas importantes. Esta evaluación proporciona información sobre los posibles impactos en las comunidades sobrecargadas y las poblaciones vulnerables, y las estrategias para mitigar los daños identificados y distribuir justamente los beneficios conocidos. Para asistencia de traducción, interpretación o accesibilidad, por favor póngase en contacto con Courtney Cecale escribiendo a courtney.cecale@ecy.wa.gov o llamando al (360) 480-6270.

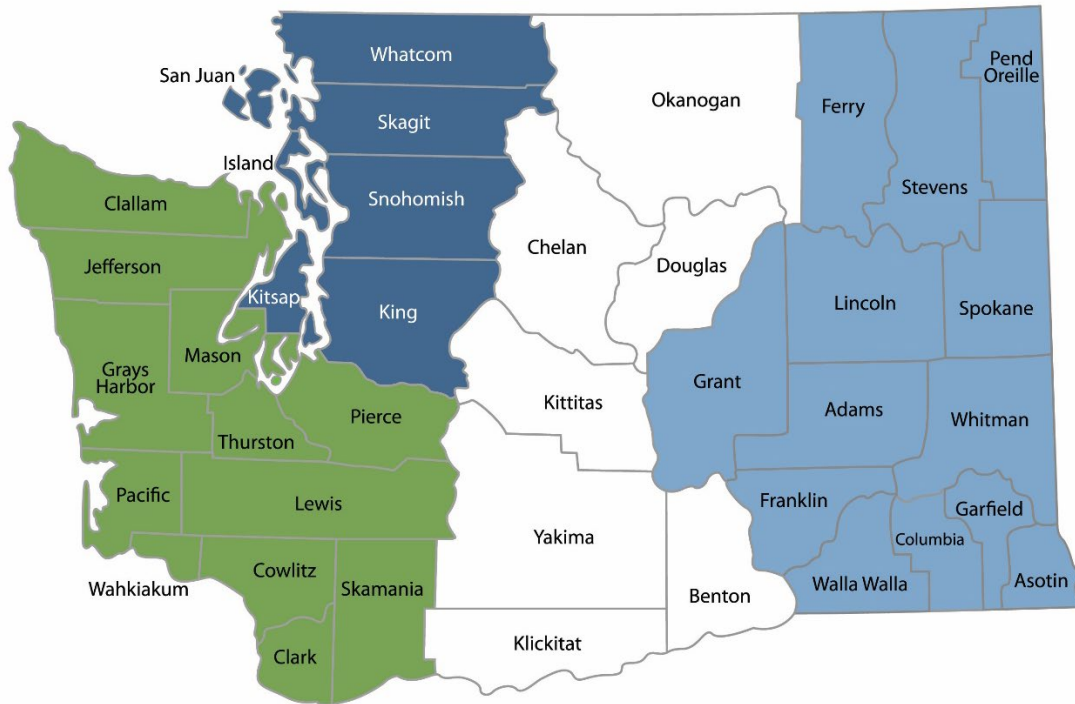
根据华盛顿州环境正义法([RCW 70A.02](#))，生态部在制定某些重大行动时必须进行环境正义评估。该评估提供对负担过重社区和弱势群体潜在影响的信息，以及减轻已确定的危害和公平分配已知利益的策略。如需笔译、口译或无障碍协助，请联系 Courtney Cecale，电子邮件：courtney.cecale@ecy.wa.gov或电话 (360) 480-6270。

Theo luật Công Bằng Môi Trường của tiểu bang (RCW 70A.02), Bộ Môi Sinh được yêu cầu tiến hành Đánh Giá Công Bằng Môi Trường trong quá trình triển khai một số hành động quan trọng. Đánh giá này cung cấp thông tin về các tác động tiềm ẩn đối với các cộng đồng đang chịu tổn hại và các nhóm dân cư dễ bị tổn hại cũng như các chiến lược nhằm giảm thiểu tác hại đã xác định và phân chia công bằng các lợi ích đã biết. Để được hỗ trợ về thông dịch, giải thích hoặc sự giúp đỡ cho người khuyết tật, vui lòng liên hệ với Courtney Cecale theo địa chỉ courtney.cecale@ecy.wa.gov hoặc (360) 480-6270.

주 환경부는 중요한 조치를 계획할 때 환경 정의 평가를 수행해야 합니다. 이 평가는 취약계층 지역사회와 취약인구에 대한 잠재적 영향 관련 정보와, 확인된 피해를 완화하고 알려진 혜택을 공정하게 분배하기 위한 전략을 제공합니다. 번역, 통역, 또는 장애인 서비스 지원은 담당자 (Courtney Cecale)에게 이메일 courtney.cecale@ecy.wa.gov 또는 전화 (360) 480-6270으로 문의하십시오.

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

Map of Counties Served



Southwest Region 360-407-6300	Northwest Region 206-594-0000	Central Region 509-575-2490	Eastern Region 509-329-3400
---	---	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Region	Counties served	Mailing Address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	P.O. Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	P.O. Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima	1250 West Alder Street Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman	4601 North Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400
Headquarters	Statewide	P.O. Box 46700 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

Agency Request Legislation: Interagency Climate Resilience Coordinating Council

An Environmental Justice Assessment (per RCW 70A.02.060)²

Executive Office
Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, WA

September 2024 | Publication 24-01-008



² <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.02&full=true#70A.02.010>

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Environmental Justice Assessment	7
<i>Purpose of the Environmental Justice Assessment</i>	7
Section 1: Background	4
Section 2: Notification that an Environmental Justice Assessment has been Initiated	5
Section 3: Identify Affected Tribes	6
<i>Preparing for Tribal Consultation</i>	6
Section 4: Offer Consultation:	7
Section 5: Summary of Tribal Consultation & Engagement	7
<i>Summary of Tribal Consultation</i>	7
Section 6: Identification of Overburdened Communities & Vulnerable Populations	8
<i>Identify Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations</i>	8
Section 7: Summary of Community Engagement	11
<i>Summarizing Community Engagement</i>	11
<i>Identify Potential Environmental Benefits & Harms from Action</i>	13
Section 9: Options to Eliminate, Reduce, or Mitigate Harms and Equitably Distribute Benefits	14
<i>Identify Options to Eliminate, Reduce, or Mitigate Harms & Equitably Distribute Benefits</i>	14
Section 10: Executive Summary	15
Section 11: Notification of Completed Assessment	16

Executive Summary

The state's climate resilience strategy aims to prioritize actions that address needs of overburdened communities, vulnerable populations and Tribes across the state to support building community resilience to climate impacts. This includes marginalized and underserved communities such as communities of color, Tribes, immigrants, low-income and rural communities, and populations such as people living with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, people with underlying health disparities, and older and younger people.

Agency request legislation

The proposed Ecology agency request legislation would establish a long-lasting way for state agencies to collaborate and align our work strategically on climate resilience – as is recommended in the state's climate resilience strategy. It will also foster greater transparency and accountability on our work to increase Washingtonian's resilience to climate change through tracking and reporting.

The proposal would authorize the creation of an interagency climate resilience coordinating council made up of agency leaders (10 agencies involved in developing the state's strategy). The council could establish a staff committee to help with more frequent coordination. Additional advisory committees or work groups could also be formed, as needed, to inform the state's work.

The proposed legislation also emphasizes the importance of ongoing equitable participation and meaningful engagement and consultation with a variety of interested parties with a focus on addressing barriers to engagement for Tribes and communities with environmental justice concerns. Ecology's proposed funding for implementing this bill includes new staffing and proposed resources to reduce barriers to engagement such as through direct compensation and partnerships with community-based organizations. By creating a structure for interagency coordination and funding the associated outreach and engagement, the state will be better able to connect with diverse audiences statewide.

The proposed legislation also includes outreach and engagement approaches recommended by representatives from environmental and social justice groups such as hosting climate assemblies and topic-based meetings, supporting community-based organizations as partners, attending and presenting at gatherings hosted by other groups, and providing compensation for those with lived-experiences or otherwise addressing barriers to participation (e.g. funding travel). Climate assemblies were specifically recommended as way to establishing a co-governance model and build relationships between overburdened communities and vulnerable populations and state agencies.

Focused Outreach and Engagement

Ecology contracted with Front and Centered to assist with gathering early input from climate and social justice organizations representing overburdened communities and vulnerable populations on the strategy. We also held a follow up conversation that focused on how best to

structure ongoing outreach and engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations and the proposed approach to governance. A final report captured recommendations from these focused outreach and engagement efforts.

We held separate Tribal listening sessions, presented at several state-Tribal climate roundtables held by the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs and other Tribal meetings, and hosted broader listening sessions. We offered Tribal consultation on the strategy process and on the associated agency request legislation.

Environmental Justice Assessment

Purpose of the Environmental Justice Assessment

The Environmental Justice (EJ) Assessment process helps assess the environmental justice impacts of Significant Agency Actions (SAAs). The assessment informs and supports consideration of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations when making decisions. This information assists with the equitable distribution of environmental benefits, the reduction of environmental harms, and the identification and reduction of health disparities.

The EJ assessment process aligns with Washington’s Environmental Justice law called the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act ([RCW 70A.02³](#)), as well as federal commitments in the [Performance Partnership Agreement⁴](#) with the EPA. The assessment process draws on best practices established in [Technical Guidance for Assessing Environmental Justice in Regulatory Analysis⁵](#) and [Promising Practices for EJ Methodologies in NEPA Reviews⁶](#).

Environmental justice assessments are to be completed for the following actions:

- The development and adoption of significant legislative rules as defined in RCW.05.328⁷
- The development and adoption of any new grant or loan program that a covered agency is explicitly authorized or required by statute to carry out
- A capital project, grant, or loan award of at least \$12,000,000 or a transportation project, grant, or loan of at least \$15,000,000
- The submission of agency request legislation to the office of the governor or the office of financial management for approval
- (Covered actions are expected to expand in 2025)

This assessment is not required to be a comprehensive or an exhaustive examination of all potential impacts of a significant agency action and does not require novel quantitative or economic analysis of the proposed significant agency action.

The time and resource investment, and depth of assessment, will be influenced by the reasonable applicability of the questions to the agency action.

Ecology plans to update this document and incorporate what we learn through practice, community engagement, Tribal consultation, and any guidance we may receive from the Environmental Justice Council.

This Environmental Justice Assessment is adapted for publication and does not include internal agency process instructions.

³ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.02&full=true>

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Accountability-transparency/Government-coordination/Partnering-with-the-EPA>

⁵ <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/technical-guidance-assessing-environmental-justice-regulatory-analysis>

⁶ https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-08/documents/nepa_promising_practices_document_2016.pdf

⁷ <http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=34.05.328>

Section 1: Background

The information in this section is provided for the Office of Financial Management's [dashboard](#)⁸ which includes all covered agency's Environmental Justice Assessment notices.

1. Descriptive title of project/action:

Agency Request Legislation: Implementing the state's integrated climate response strategy through an interagency coordinating council

2. Date EJ Assessment initiated:

Ecology submitted the Office of Financial Management (OFM) announcement on 8/14/2024 and sent the Tribal consultation letters on 8/14/2024. Agency request legislation package will be submitted to OFM September 13, 2024.

3. Ecology Program/Office:

Program A/Exec

4. Point of contact for EJ Assessment:

Jennifer Hennessey

5. Significant Agency Action type, select one or more:

- Rulemaking
- New grant or loan program
- New capital project, grant, or loan of \$12 million or more
- Request legislation
- Other, explain:

6. Write a short summary of the action.

This proposed legislation would establish the recommended governance structure for climate resilience coordination, ensuring the state has an ongoing mechanism for strategic alignment, collaboration, transparency, and accountability across the many state agencies that can support and advance greater climate resilience in Washington.

The legislation would authorize the creation of an interagency climate resilience coordinating council comprised of agency leaders (10 agencies involved in developing the state's strategy). The council could establish a staff committee to facilitate more frequent

⁸ <https://ofm.wa.gov/budget/budget-related-information/agency-activities/environmental-justice-assessment-notices>

coordination. Additional advisory committees or work groups could also be formed, as needed, to inform the state's work.

This proposal also emphasizes the importance of ongoing engagement and consultation with a variety of interested parties with a focus on addressing barriers to engagement for Tribes and communities with environmental justice concerns. Ecology's proposed funding for implementing this bill includes new staffing and proposed resources to reduce barriers to engagement such as through direct compensation and partnerships with community-based organizations.

Broadly, the climate resilience strategy aims to prioritize actions that address needs of overburdened communities, vulnerable populations and Tribes across the state to support building community resilience to climate impacts. This includes marginalized and underserved communities such as communities of color, Tribes, immigrants, low-income and rural communities, and populations such as people living with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, people with underlying health disparities, and older and younger people.

7. Identify the method(s) for the public to comment on this proposed action for this assessment.

Early in the process, we held virtual listening sessions and met in person and online with a wide range of groups to discuss climate change impacts and the needs of communities to better prepare for and adapt to these changes. We also conducted an online survey to gather input to help us scope the issues and concerns. More recently, we held a public comment period on the draft strategy from June 11-July 11, 2024. As part of the comment period, we also held virtual listening sessions.

Additional targeted outreach methods were used for communities with environmental and social justice concerns and Tribes. These are described later on in this document.

8. Create/provide an Ecology webpage with information about this proposed action.

Provide link here:

[Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)

Section 2: Notification that an Environmental Justice Assessment has been Initiated

This section instructs Ecology staff to notify OFM about the initiation of the action.

Section 3: Identify Affected Tribes

This section summarizes preliminary planning for Tribal Consultation. Ecology must offer consultation with Tribes on significant agency actions that affect federally recognized Tribes' rights and interest in their tribal lands.

Preparing for Tribal Consultation

1. Is the proposed action likely to have any local or regional impacts to federally reserved Tribal rights and resources, including but not limited to, those protected by treaty, executive order, or federal law? Choose one of the following:
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
2. List any federally recognized Tribes that are expected to be affected by the proposed action. If it is determined during consultation that Tribes do not wish to be included, then do not include them.

This is a statewide state agency coordination council. We anticipate that Tribal members or staff will be invited to participate in specific advisory committees and workgroups as the state works to implement the actions in the strategy. On behalf of the Council, Ecology will also offer consultation with individual Tribes and conduct ongoing coordination and engagement with Tribes and Tribal organizations. The proposed legislation does not have any direct impacts to Tribal rights or interests. The request helps provide resources for additional state-Tribal coordination, consultation, engagement on implementation of the state's climate resilience strategy and actions.

3. If it is determined at any other point in the process of the assessment that Tribes have self-identified as being potentially impacted by the action, then include them in the assessment and offer consultation.
No additional Tribes have self-identified.
4. Describe plans to offer consultation to identified Tribes.

We offered consultation to all federally recognized Tribes with rights in Washington on the strategy when we initiated the process in fall of 2023. We also offered consultation to the same Tribes on the proposed agency request legislation, per requirements under the HEAL Act.

Section 4: Offer Consultation:

This section directs Ecology staff to offer consultation with Tribes on significant agency actions that affect federally recognized Tribes' rights and interest in their tribal lands.

Section 5: Summary of Tribal Consultation & Engagement

Tribal consultation is intended to inform the answers to all questions in this section.

Summary of Tribal Consultation

1. Describe potential impacts (including harms and benefits) to federally recognized Tribal rights and interests in their tribal lands.

- Do not share sensitive data or location information attributable to individual sites.
- Do not share any information that Tribes have requested that you not share.

Tribes have significant interests that are threatened by climate impacts. Tribes are undertaking many climate adaptation and resilience actions on their own and this request does not interfere with Tribally-led activities or rights. This request does not have any direct impacts to Tribal rights or interests. The request helps provide resources for additional state-Tribal coordination, consultation, engagement on implementation of the state's climate resilience strategy and actions.

2. Describe potential impacts related to Tribal rights and interests that are not in Tribal lands?

Not applicable.

3. Summarize recommendations from Tribes to:

a. Mitigate or eliminate potential harms from the action

None received to-date.

b. Equitably distribute benefits from the action

None received to-date.

4. Describe how consultation, engagement, and analyses of impacts to Tribes has informed the development of the action. If it has not, explain why.

We held separate Tribal listening sessions, presented at several state-Tribal climate roundtables held by the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and other Tribal forums, and hosted broader

listening sessions. We offered Tribal consultation on the strategy process and the agency request legislation.

We specifically sought input on the governance structure but did not receive a lot of feedback. The limited responses we did receive represented a wide range of advice and options, which made it difficult to resolve and determine any single generally supported pathway. Comments included the following ideas:

- Having Tribal representation on the agency’s coordinating council (conflicting comments)
- Having representatives from Tribal organizations
- Having Tribal representatives involved in specific topical areas or work groups
- Continuing to reach out to and engage individual Tribes and offer consultation.

This proposal is strategically intended to support Tribal coordination, consultation, engagement on implementation of the state’s climate resilience strategy and actions. We will continue to engage and consult with Tribes to find mutually supportive and beneficial pathways to climate resilience in the State.

5. Describe any plans to continue consultation or engagement with Tribes related to this action.

We offered consultation on the proposed agency request legislation and will continue to engage Tribes, Tribal organizations and Tribal lobbyists to gauge their interests and concerns with this proposal throughout the summer and fall.

Section 6: Identification of Overburdened Communities & Vulnerable Populations

This section identifies overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, as identified in the [definitions of RCW 70A.02](#), who will be affected by the action.

Identify Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations

1. Identify the geographic area(s) anticipated to be affected by the action.

Every region of our state has been affected by climate change. This proposed legislation would establish an interagency climate resilience coordinating council that addresses climate resilience issues statewide. The geographic areas affected by climate change and this action are statewide with benefits anticipated across the state.

The effects of climate change have disproportionate impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns including people of color, low-income individuals, and other

vulnerable or overburdened populations. People living with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, people with underlying health disparities, and older and younger people are also more vulnerable to and affected by climate impacts.

As a result of long histories of unfair policies and practices, these communities already face many – and often interconnected – social, health, and environmental challenges. Because these communities have been denied access to important social services, they may not have the right resources to adapt to changing conditions or reduce their exposure to harms.

2. When applicable, using the [Washington State Department of Health’s Environmental Health Disparities Map \(EHD Map\)](#), identify the EHD Map rankings for all census tracts likely to be impacted by the action.

Not applicable.

3. From the rankings identified in question 2, are there any census tracts ranked 9 and 10?

Yes

No

If yes, describe.

Not applicable. This is a statewide action so all census tracts are potentially impacted.

4. Please describe additional cumulative health considerations relevant to this action.

Not applicable.

5. When applicable, using the [EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool \(EJScreen\)](#), identify areas likely to be impacted by the action that are at or above the 80th percentile⁹ (in state) for the “People of color” and “Low income” socioeconomic indicators.

Not applicable

6. Identify other EJScreen “Socioeconomic” and “Health Disparities” indicators at or above 80th percentile (in state) that are most relevant to this action.

Not applicable.

⁹ The EPA identified the 80th percentile as an initial starting point and potential indicator of environmental justice considerations. <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/frequent-questions-about-ejscreen>

7. Using EJScreen, identify additional anticipated impacts from climate change in the impacted area, if relevant.

Not applicable. This is a statewide action and climate risks and impacts vary across the state for different communities and populations.

8. Using the federal [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#)¹⁰, identify if the potentially affected area is considered disadvantaged for climate risks for additional indicators (as relevant).

Not applicable. This is a statewide action and climate risks and impacts vary across the state for different communities and populations.

9. Identify additional overburdened communities and vulnerable populations that are likely to be affected by the action.

Every region of our state has been affected by climate change. Over time, these impacts will accelerate, increasing threats to our state’s economy, our environment, and the health and well-being of our communities.

The effects of climate change have disproportionate impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns including people of color, low-income individuals, and other vulnerable or overburdened populations. People living with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, people with underlying health disparities, and older and younger people are also more vulnerable to and affected by climate impacts.

As a result of long histories of unfair policies and practices, these communities already face many – and often interconnected – social, health, and environmental challenges. Because these communities have been denied access to important social services, they may not have the right resources to adapt to changing conditions or reduce their exposure to harms.

For example, many communities of color in urban environments lack adequate tree canopy due to historic disinvestments in these communities. The lack of tree canopy makes these neighborhoods even hotter during heat waves. Another example is low-income individuals who live in rental housing. Their homes are often more inefficient and often lack cooling and clean

¹⁰ This is a national tool and may provide relevant information and understanding of the climate related context of the action. Learn more about the methodology for identifying if a community is disadvantaged for climate risks here: [Methodology & data - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(geoplatform.gov\)](#)

air systems. As renters, they typically either cannot make changes to their living conditions at all, and even if allowed, cannot afford the expensive upgrades to their homes.

10. Through community engagement, were additional overburdened communities and vulnerable populations identified who are likely to be affected by the action? Describe additional communities or populations identified, and the reasons they would be considered overburdened and vulnerable.

No.

11. Through Tribal Consultation, were additional overburdened communities and vulnerable populations identified who are likely to be affected by the action? Describe additional communities or populations identified, and the reasons they would be considered overburdened and vulnerable.

No.

Section 7: Summary of Community Engagement

This section summarizes community engagement activities. Community Engagement should be tailored to specifically reach overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. Community engagement is required for all significant agency actions, but the engagement methods will vary depending on the size, scope, and topic of the project. The level, type, and form of engagement is based on the likelihood that the actions may cause environmental harm or may affect the equitable distribution of environmental benefits to an overburdened community or a vulnerable population.

Summarizing Community Engagement

1. Describe the engagement activities with identified overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

Ecology developed a large, interested parties list that included contacts and organizations that represent and work with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. We used this list to notify people of engagement opportunities throughout the process.

We also contracted with Front and Centered to assist with gathering early input from climate and social justice organizations representing overburdened communities and vulnerable populations on the strategy. Front and Centered held two separate workshops with representatives from these groups to provide input on priorities and needs and provide recommendations on the state's draft strategies and actions. We also held a follow up

conversation that focused on how best to structure ongoing outreach and engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations and the proposed approach to governance.

2. What actions were taken to help address barriers to meaningful engagement?

Ecology translated our focus sheet into several languages (Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese). We offered virtual listening sessions at a variety of times of day, including evening sessions, to help address barriers to participation based on timing. The listening session platform also offered live transcription/closed captioning.

Front and Centered covered travel costs for participants in the climate assembly and provided translation services for both of their workshops on the strategy. Recognizing the barriers of apathy and distrust toward government that exist, we worked through Front and Centered to leverage their connections with communities and help overcome these challenges. We held a follow up session with Front and Centered and some of their participants to discuss what we heard from them, where we were making changes based on their input, and remaining questions and concerns. This type of follow up is often lacking can reinforce apathy or mistrust of government processes.

3. Identify overburdened communities or vulnerable populations potentially affected by the action who were not engaged and explain why not.

Through the development of the strategy, we primarily relied on engaging with organizations that work on social and environmental justice issues and with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. These partnerships helped facilitate additional input from leaders of additional organizations and community members from around the state.

4. Summarize recommendations from members of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to mitigate or eliminate potential harms from the action and/or equitably distribute benefits from the action.

Recommendations heard through these forums included hosting climate assemblies and topic-based meetings, supporting community-based organizations as partners, attending and presenting at gatherings hosted by other groups, and providing compensation for those with lived-experiences or otherwise addressing participatory barriers (e.g. funding travel).

Some members recommended establishing a co-governance model and building relationships between overburdened communities and vulnerable populations with state agencies. Climate assemblies were recommended as one way to operationalize co-governance.

5. Describe any plans for ongoing engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations related to this action.

We plan to continue to reach out to representatives of environmental justice and social justice organizations to evaluate their support for this legislation and consider changes that would address any outstanding concerns.

Additionally, the proposed legislation, and associated funding request, incorporates the resources needed to carry out some of the recommended outreach and engagement mechanisms heard through engagement conducted to date.

Section 8: Potential Environmental Benefits & Harms from Action

This section summarizes anticipated benefits and harms from the potential action, and to assess impacts on overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. The level, type, and form of engagement is based on the likelihood that the actions may cause environmental harm or may affect the equitable distribution of environmental benefits to an overburdened community or a vulnerable population. Answers to the questions in this section may have helped in strategizing our approach to engagement.

Identify Potential Environmental Benefits & Harms from Action

1. Describe the anticipated benefits (direct and/or indirect) from this action.

This action will ensure the state has an ongoing mechanism for coordination on climate resilience. Benefits include improved strategic alignment, collaboration, transparency, and accountability across the many state agencies that can support and advance greater climate resilience in Washington.

2. Who will primarily benefit from this action?

State agencies will benefit from increased coordination with one another.

3. How is the action expected to benefit specifically overburdened communities or vulnerable populations? If there is no benefit, identify potential barriers to benefitting from the action.

The proposed agency request legislation helps support state implementation of the climate resilience strategy, including providing resources needed to foster ongoing outreach and engagement with overburdened communities, vulnerable populations and Tribes. By coordinating the implementation of the strategy, the state will reduce risks and harms caused by climate impacts, create benefits and support more equitable outcomes for these communities.

4. Describe anticipated harms (direct and/or indirect) from this action.

No harms (direct and/or indirect) are anticipated from this action to establish an interagency climate resilience coordinating council.

5. Who will primarily experience the harms?

Not applicable.

6. Describe how the action may harm overburdened communities or vulnerable populations? Be as specific as possible.

There are not direct harms anticipated from this action. However, meaningful engagement is essential to ensure that the state advances equitable climate resilience actions. The state must actively and effectively address barriers to engagement so that marginalized and underserved communities most impacted by climate change are meaningfully engaged in the design or implementation of resilience strategies that affect them.

7. Describe how the action would address environmental and health disparities.

This proposed legislation would establish an interagency climate resilience coordinating council which would not directly affect environmental and health disparities. However, the intended outcome is strategic alignment, collaboration, transparency, and accountability across the many state agencies to support and advance greater climate resilience for communities across the state. This includes ensuring that areas and communities most impacted by climate change and experiencing environmental and health disparities are included in the integrated response strategy.

The proposal includes resources to address community barriers to engagement and specifically endorses the use of methods of engagement that are supported by organizations that serve and work with overburdened communities (climate assemblies, coming to groups, topically-based forums) to improve quality of engagement through more targeted outreach efforts.

Section 9: Options to Eliminate, Reduce, or Mitigate Harms and Equitably Distribute Benefits

This section summarizes options identified for eliminating, reducing, or mitigating harms, as well as options for equitably distributing anticipated benefits. The answers in this section should be informed by engagement, answers from the previous subsections, and any legislative or regulatory boundaries that limit possible decision making.

Identify Options to Eliminate, Reduce, or Mitigate Harms & Equitably Distribute Benefits

1. Describe options to reduce, mitigate, or eliminate the identified probable harms to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations; and options to equitably distribute the benefits.

There are no anticipated harms to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations from this action. To ensure the development of an equitable and comprehensive climate resilience

strategy, the proposal includes resources to address community barriers to engagement and specifically endorses the use of methods of engagement that are supported by organizations that serve and work with overburdened communities (climate assemblies, coming to groups, topically-based forums) to improve quality of engagement through more targeted outreach efforts.

2. Describe methods chosen for this action to reduce, mitigate, or eliminate the identified probable harms to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations; and methods chosen to equitably distribute the benefits. You must consider the following methods, but are not limited to them:

Providing equitable access and meaningful engagement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities in the implementation of the legislation.

3. If the agency determines it does not have the ability or authority to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate environmental harms caused by the action, or address the equitable distribution of environmental benefits, explain why that determination was made.

Not applicable.

Section 10: Executive Summary

The state's climate resilience strategy aims to prioritize actions that address needs of overburdened communities, vulnerable populations and Tribes across the state to support building community resilience to climate impacts. This includes marginalized and underserved communities such as communities of color, Tribes, immigrants, low-income and rural communities, and populations such as people living with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, people with underlying health disparities, and older and younger people.

Agency request legislation

The proposed Ecology agency request legislation would establish a long-lasting way for state agencies to collaborate and align our work strategically on climate resilience – as is recommended in the state's climate resilience strategy. It will also foster greater transparency and accountability on our work to increase Washingtonian's resilience to climate change through tracking and reporting.

The proposal would authorize the creation of an interagency climate resilience coordinating council made up of agency leaders (10 agencies involved in developing the state's strategy). The council could establish a staff committee to help with more frequent coordination. Additional advisory committees or work groups could also be formed, as needed, to inform the state's work.

The proposed legislation also emphasizes the importance of ongoing equitable participation and meaningful engagement and consultation with a variety of interested parties with a focus

on addressing barriers to engagement for Tribes and communities with environmental justice concerns. Ecology's proposed funding for implementing this bill includes new staffing and proposed resources to reduce barriers to engagement such as through direct compensation and partnerships with community-based organizations. By creating a structure for interagency coordination and funding the associated outreach and engagement, the state will be better able to connect with diverse audiences statewide.

The proposed legislation also includes outreach and engagement approaches recommended by representatives from environmental and social justice groups such as hosting climate assemblies and topic-based meetings, supporting community-based organizations as partners, attending and presenting at gatherings hosted by other groups, and providing compensation for those with lived-experiences or otherwise addressing barriers to participation (e.g. funding travel). Climate assemblies were specifically recommended as way to establishing a co-governance model and build relationships between overburdened communities and vulnerable populations and state agencies.

Focused Outreach and Engagement

Ecology contracted with Front and Centered to assist with gathering early input from climate and social justice organizations representing overburdened communities and vulnerable populations on the strategy. We also held a follow up conversation that focused on how best to structure ongoing outreach and engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations and the proposed approach to governance. A final report captured recommendations from these focused outreach and engagement efforts.

We held separate Tribal listening sessions, presented at several state-Tribal climate roundtables held by the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and other Tribal meetings, and hosted broader listening sessions. We offered Tribal consultation on the strategy process and on the associated agency request legislation.

Section 11: Notification of Completed Assessment

This section summarizes processes for staff to take once they have completed their assessment, including steps for sharing the final product. Learn more about all ongoing and completed Environmental Justice Assessments on our [agency webpage](https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Environmental-Justice/HEAL/EJ-Assessments)¹¹.

¹¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Environmental-Justice/HEAL/EJ-Assessments>