



# Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy

## 2025 Progress Report

### Executive Program

Washington State Department of Ecology  
Olympia, Washington

September 2025, Publication 25-01-006



## Publication Information

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- Ecology, July 2021. Cedar Creek Fire near Mazama, WA

### Related Information

Cross-referenced or relevant documents:

Publication 24-01-006: [Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy](#)

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**Website**<sup>1</sup>: [Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy](#)

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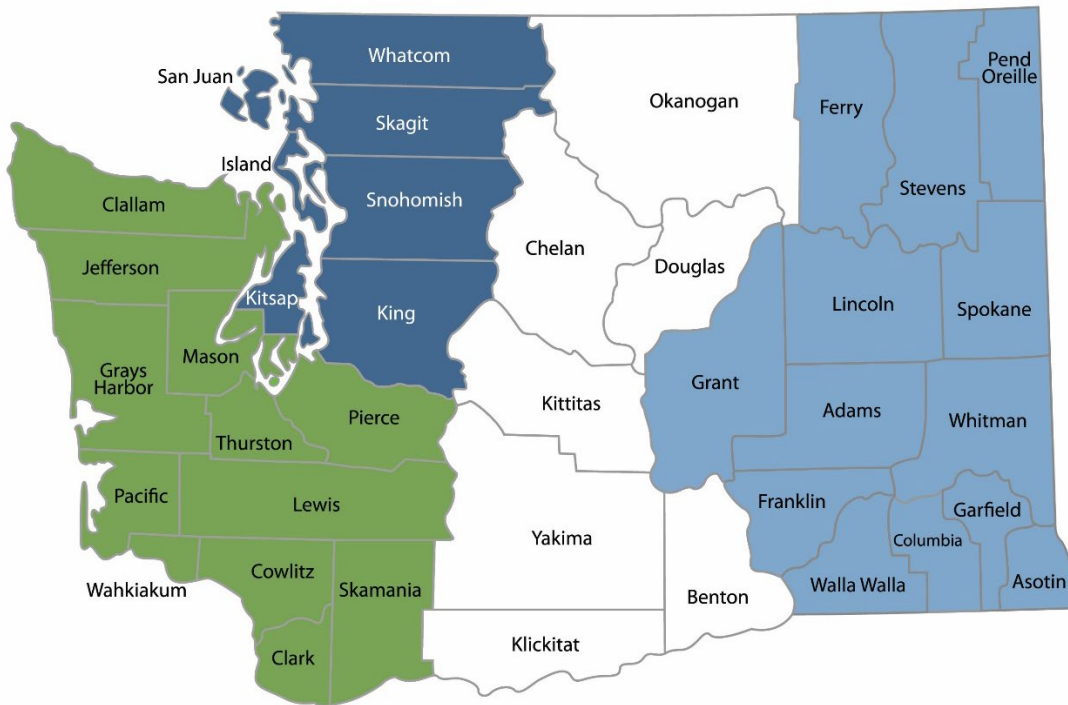
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<sup>1</sup> <https://ecology.wa.gov/air-climate/responding-to-climate-change/washingtons-climate-strategy>

# Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

## Map of Counties Served



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

# Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy

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DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

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## What This Report is About

Over the past year, state agencies have begun implementing [Washington’s Climate Resilience Strategy](#)<sup>2</sup> ([RCW 70A.05](#)<sup>3</sup>). This report summarizes actions in the strategy that received funding, highlights progress made by agencies, and outlines our next steps in building resilience to climate change impacts for communities, infrastructure, and natural and working lands across the state.

Measuring and evaluating our progress is a critical component to our implementation of the Climate Resilience Strategy. Ecology and partner agencies must report on our progress in implementing the strategy every two years ([RCW 70A.05.020](#)<sup>4</sup>). Progress reports such as this one help us measure the effectiveness of our efforts, ensure that we are building safer communities and more resilient infrastructure, and provide transparency and accountability to decisionmakers and the public regarding investment of public funding for climate adaptation and preparation.

The Department of Ecology published the Climate Resilience Strategy on September 30, 2024. Since then, agencies have begun implementing actions using existing resources while also seeking funding from the Legislature to support new work recommended in the strategy. This report describes progress on both fronts. Because funding from the Legislature only became available at the start of the new fiscal year on July 1, new work supported by those resources is still in its early stages.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://ecology.wa.gov/air-climate/responding-to-climate-change/washingtons-climate-strategy>

<sup>3</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.05>

<sup>4</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.05.020>

# What is Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy?

The Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy is the state's roadmap for preparing for and adapting to the greatest climate impacts facing the state:

- Drought and reduced water availability
- Flooding
- Marine and coastal changes
- Extreme heat
- Wildfire and smoke

Climate resilience is the ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changes in climate and minimizing negative impacts to our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities.

- For natural systems, increasing climate resilience involves restoring and increasing the health, function, and integrity of our ecosystems and improving their ability to absorb and recover from climate-affected disturbances.
- For communities, increasing climate resilience means enhancing their ability to understand, prevent, adapt, and recover from climate impacts to people and infrastructure.

Development of the Climate Resilience Strategy was directed by the Legislature (RCW 70A.05 ) and published by Ecology on September 30, 2024. The strategy guides the efforts of state agencies around our shared vision and goals for a more climate resilient Washington.

- **Vision:**
  - State agencies are equipped to prepare for, respond to, and recover from current and projected climate impacts in an integrated, strategic, equitable, and durable manner. This effort will increase the resilience of Washington's communities, infrastructure, natural systems, and working lands. State agencies will partner to create, support, and implement policies and actions that:
    - Reduce risks.
    - Promote safe, healthy, and vibrant communities.
    - Lessen vulnerabilities.
    - Advance environmental justice.
    - Deliver more equitable outcomes.
- **Communities Goal:**
  - Foster healthy, safe, equitable, and economically vibrant communities that can effectively and proactively reduce and manage their greatest climate change risks and vulnerabilities.

- **Infrastructure Goal:**
  - Advance and modify infrastructure that supports natural systems, considers the needs of vulnerable communities, and provides consistent, safe, and reliable services that withstand disruptions and risks from climate impacts.
- **Natural and Working Lands Goal:**
  - Protect, restore, and manage natural systems and working lands so they provide continued and enhanced ecological, cultural, social, and economic benefits under climate impacts.
- **Governance Goal:**
  - Develop efficient and lasting processes and structures across governments that ensure our strategic alignment, collaboration, transparency, and accountability with each other. These processes will help us adapt and be flexible as we implement the Climate Resilience Strategy.

The strategy identifies new work our agencies proposed to help build climate resilience and highlights existing and ongoing efforts that contribute to climate resilient outcomes.

The strategy was created over a year-long process led by Ecology in partnership with nine other state agencies:

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Department of Agriculture       | • Department of Health            |
| • Department of Commerce          | • Department of Natural Resources |
| • State Conservation Commission   | • Puget Sound Partnership         |
| • Emergency Management Division   | • Department of Transportation    |
| • Department of Fish and Wildlife |                                   |

In developing the strategy, Ecology conducted outreach and engagement with communities and partners across Washington. We hosted listening sessions, conducted a survey with more than 700 respondents, and held a public comment period to gather feedback and suggestions. We also worked closely with Tribes, overburdened communities, and vulnerable populations to ensure the strategy reflects the priorities and needs of those most affected by climate impacts.

## Which of our new proposed actions were funded by the Legislature?

Our agencies developed 44 funding requests to support the new actions proposed by agencies in the Climate Resilience Strategy. These requests were shared with the Governor’s office shortly before the strategy was published.

After publication of the strategy, the state began facing a historic budget shortfall in the state’s operating and transportation budgets. In January 2025, the operating budget shortfall was \$12 billion, and this grew to nearly \$16 billion by the end of April.

These budget challenges significantly limited the Legislature’s ability to fully fund new actions identified in the strategy, as well as to sustain ongoing agency work that supports climate resilience. Notably, the capital budget remained stable and all but one of the capital requests proposed in the strategy were funded.

In total, 27 of the actions proposed by agencies in the Climate Resilience Strategy received funding from the Legislature, though not all to the level requested. While accounts funded by the Climate Commitment Act were a strong and well-aligned funding source to support this work, the constrained budget environment led to increased pressure on these accounts.

- Total operating budget funding amount for actions in the Climate Resilience Strategy:
  - \$123,088,000
- Total capital budget funding amount for actions in the Climate Resilience Strategy:
  - \$196,998,000

The tables below highlight actions from the Climate Resilience Strategy that received funding in the Fiscal Year 2025-2027 biennium under the operating and capital budgets.

## Actions funded in the 2025-2027 operating budget

Table 1. Operating Budget Summary

Title	Agency	Action Number	Agency Request	Final Funded Amount
Climate resilience workgroup	Ecology	1A	\$1,158,000	\$331,000
Climate change response strategy	Health	2A, 2B	\$2,353,898	\$382,000
Post wildland fire response	Natural Resources	2E	\$4,177,000	\$375,000
Livestock composting	Agriculture	2G	\$1,722,830	\$893,000
Emergency food assistance	Agriculture	2J	\$10,000,000	\$93,250,000
Shoreline and GMA Updates	Ecology	3B	\$1,317,000	\$1,317,000
Forest Health and Community Wildfire	State Conservation Commission (SCC)	3D	\$10,000,000*	\$2,500,000
Riparian plant propagation program	SCC	4B	\$4,000,000*	\$3,444,000
Sustainable Farms and Fields	SCC	4B	\$9,000,000*	\$2,820,000
Voluntary Stewardship Program	SCC	4B	\$13,659,000*	\$10,719,000
Conservation technical assistance	SCC	4C	\$24,000,000*	\$3,800,000
Integrated science hub for ag	SCC	4C	\$5,000,000	\$1,000,000
Energy audits and plan	Corrections	7A	\$500,000	\$577,000
GHG emission reductions	WDFW	8J	\$530,000	\$530,000

\*These SCC requests include both ongoing funding levels and requests for new, additional support. The new funding requests above the ongoing levels for these programs were:

- Forest Health and Community Wildfire: \$5,000,000
- Riparian Plant Propagation Program: \$1,400,000
- Sustainable Farms and Fields: \$6,000,000
- Voluntary Stewardship Program: \$3,000,000
- Conservation Technical Assistance: \$20,000,000

## Actions funded in the 2025-2027 capital budget

Table 2. Capital Budget Summary

<b>Title</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Action Number</b>	<b>Agency Request</b>	<b>Final Funded Amount</b>
Farmland Protection and Land Access	State Conservation Commission (SCC)	4A	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
Regional Conservation Partnership Program	SCC	4B	\$15,000,000	\$6,320,000
Natural Resources Investments for the Economy and Environment	SCC	4B	\$10,000,000	\$5,000,000
Improve Shellfish Growing Areas	SCC	4B	\$5,500,000	\$3,500,000
Voluntary Stewardship Program	SCC	4B	\$4,000,000	\$3,000,000
Voluntary Riparian Grant Program	SCC	4B	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000
Reducing Toxic Wood Stove Emissions	Ecology	5A	\$4,164,000	\$4,164,000
Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Grant Program	Ecology	5B	\$30,000,000	\$10,000,000
Columbia River Water Supply Development Program	Ecology	6B	\$57,844,000	\$60,385,000
Water Resource Conservation Irrigation Efficiencies	SCC	6F	\$27,000,000	\$7,000,000
Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund	Puget Sound Partnership	8G	\$109,187,000	\$60,538,000
Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency	SCC	8I	\$5,000,000	\$3,000,000
Webster Nursery Expansion	Natural Resources	8K	\$5,591,000	\$5,091,000

## What Actions are Underway?

The actions listed below are those that agencies have begun implementing since the Climate Resilience Strategy was published last year. Some are supported with existing agency resources and capacity, while others are just beginning with new funding from the Legislature.

### **Strategy 1: Coordinate how to best implement the strategy across state agencies.**

#### **Action 1A: Establish a group that coordinates and implements the state’s resilience strategy and its associated funding requests**

The Legislature required partner agencies to recommend a durable structure to support the strategy’s long-term implementation. In response, our agencies proposed a climate resilience governance structure comprised of agency leaders, agency staff, and dedicated support at the Department of Ecology. Details of this governance structure are included in Action 1A in the strategy.

Under this structure, agency leadership provides high-level guidance and ensures executive-level coordination across agencies. Agency staff continue the collaborative work that developed the strategy, focusing on action implementation, measuring progress, and developing future strategy updates. Ecology staff support this overall framework and lead progress reporting and community engagement efforts.

On September 12, 2025, leaders from our ten agencies met to kick off this effort and begin identifying steps to make the governance structure permanent and enduring. Leaders spoke about the climate resilience priorities of each of their agencies, identified opportunities for cross-agency collaboration, and committed to ongoing support for and implementation of the Climate Resilience Strategy. The leaders will meet again in late-2025 to sign a Joint Statement of Intent to Cooperate which outlines these commitments and a process for future engagement.

### **Strategy 2: Plan for, respond to, and recover from climate-driven hazards and emergencies.**

#### **Action 2A and 2B: Saving lives from extreme heat in Washington State and Coordinate agency efforts to reduce wildfire smoke risks**

The Department of Health received partial funding to begin improving interagency coordination on extreme heat and wildfire smoke resilience. Responding to extreme heat and wildfire smoke

often involves multiple agencies and coordination across partners is essential. For example, both hazards can be addressed through indoor air quality improvements to provide clean, cool air. Other work can include education, improved infrastructure, and improved community engagement about hazards and solutions. Coordination across agencies is necessary to understand current capacity, assess gaps, and identify solutions, especially in communities and facilities that serve overburdened and vulnerable populations. To support implementation of this action, the Department of Health has started an assessment of cross-agency extreme heat and wildfire smoke activities. This work will inform a gap analysis and an interagency prevention and response strategy for both hazards.

### **Action 2G: Composting animal mortalities and waste to promote ecosystem resilience**

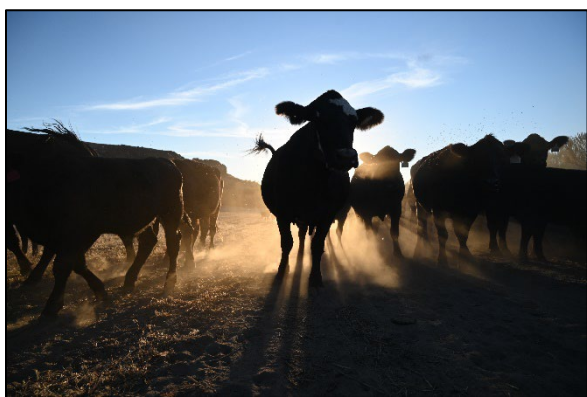


Figure 1. Cattle on a Washington farm.  
Credit – Washington State Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture received funding to support a robust animal composting infrastructure that provides a viable, alternative disposal method for animal mortality and organic waste management. This ensures a more sustainable agricultural industry, mitigates greenhouse gas emissions, reduces disease transmission, and lessens a producer’s economic burden following climate-driven mass mortality events like floods. The Department of Agriculture requested ongoing funding to support this work but received two years of funding at half the amount requested.

Significant progress has been made despite these fiscal limitations. In July 2025 the Department of Agriculture hired two project staff to support this work. Staff held a kickoff meeting with all agency subject matter experts and stakeholders to collaboratively develop a scope of work for an analysis of the economic, social, and regulatory barriers affecting livestock animal mortality and slaughter waste management services. The agency is engaging with waste management and agricultural professionals and reviewing and synthesizing the scientific literature on livestock and offal composting.

## Strategy 4: Support the vitality and viability of working lands through research, technical assistance, and incentives.

### Action 4B: Supporting private landowners to provide public benefits



Figure 2. A drip irrigation system on a vineyard in Central Washington. Credit – State Conservation Commission

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) is incorporating climate resilience considerations across its portfolio of voluntary conservation programs.

Funding for the Forest Health and Community Wildfire Resiliency program has been fully allocated for the 2025-27 biennium to conservation districts across the state in support of wildfire risk reduction efforts on private forest lands. SCC is requesting additional

funding for this program during the upcoming legislative session.

In July 2025, SCC updated guidelines for the Riparian Plant Propagation Program to expand purchasing criteria to include climate-adapted species for use in riparian restoration projects. For other programs, like the Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program, SCC added questions about climate resiliency in the application process. Work like this will be expanded across other programs to connect producers and technical assistance providers with the latest science and knowledge for implementing climate resilient conservation practices.

### Action 4C: Integrated Science Hub for Agriculture

During the 2023-2025 biennium, the State Conservation Commission established the Integrated Science Hub for Agriculture and Ecosystems (“Science Hub”) to support collaborative efforts that advance climate resilient outcomes, protect and enhance natural resources, and improve agricultural viability. During its first years, the Science Hub developed tools for voluntary conservation that enhance climate resilience, including:

- Watershed planning that integrates working lands, climate change scenarios, and ecosystem health.
- Methods for assessing the impact of voluntary conservation efforts on water quantity, salmon recovery, and food production.
- Innovative economic approaches to catalyze restoration and conservation of riparian areas and wetlands on private lands.
- Cyber-infrastructure to facilitate data sharing for conservation districts, the State Conservation Commission, and partners.

- Community-based social marketing training for conservation districts to enhance communication about climate-smart land management practices with landowners.
- Training in Coordinated Resource Management facilitation to reduce conflicts in natural resource decision-making and strengthen capacity for watershed management in the face of drought, wildfire, and flooding.

## **Strategy 6: Implement innovative water conservation and management initiatives to ensure reliable and sufficient water for people, farms, ecosystems, wildlife, and fish.**

### **Action 6E: Drinking water system resilience**

In 2023, the Legislature required community water systems with a Water System Plan to include a new climate resilience element. Water System Plans are used to identify current demand levels, project future needs, and help systems provide high quality service at the lowest cost while protecting community health. This new climate resilience element will ensure water systems are accounting for the impacts of climate change as they plan for future water use.

Following this direction from the Legislature ([RCW 43.20.310](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.20.310)<sup>5</sup>), the Department of Health, in partnership with the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group, released a new version of the [Water System Planning Guidebook](https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/drinking-water/water-system-design-and-planning/planning-requirements)<sup>6</sup> in 2025 with multiple updates to help community water systems make climate resilience informed Water System Plans.

## **Strategy 7: Plan and invest in infrastructure and state assets to minimize vulnerability to climate impacts, maintain levels of service, improve performance and condition, increase equity, and promote nature-based solutions.**

### **Action 7B: Energy climate resilience and infrastructure security.**

The Department of Commerce is leading the Washington Critical Energy Infrastructure Resilience Project to improve the resilience of energy systems and infrastructure against threats like wildfire and extreme weather. The Department is convening the Regional Community Project Team, recruiting for two staff positions, and developing a request for proposals to provide technical services in support of the project's goals. Initial work will support the North

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<sup>5</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.20.310>

<sup>6</sup> <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/drinking-water/water-system-design-and-planning/planning-requirements>

Olympic Development Council and communities and Tribes in Jefferson and Clallam Counties, beginning with the first team meeting on October 22. This work will identify energy resilience projects, including resilience hubs, and support project design efforts. In December, the Department will begin work in all 20 counties in Eastern Washington.

### **Action 7D: Climate resilient guidance for state capital and transportation grant programs**



Figure 3. A new State Route 3 bridge over Chico Creek in Kitsap County replaced an undersized culvert, which restored fish passage, addressed chronic erosion of the road embankment, and is more resilient to precipitation and tidal events. Credit – Washington State Department of Transportation

Many agencies fund critical infrastructure that provides public benefits, but without considering climate impacts in planning and design, these projects risk failure, premature replacement, and harm to communities and the environment. Integrating climate resilience considerations into infrastructure programs helps strengthen investments and ensures the responsible use of public funds. Some infrastructure programs already include climate considerations in their funding applications and scoring of project proposals. However, the variation within and across agencies has led

to inconsistencies and added burdens on funding applicants.

The Department of Ecology is partnering with the Systems Improvement Team (SYNC), an interagency team focused on improving the state’s infrastructure systems, to assess how state agencies currently incorporate climate resilience into infrastructure grant programs, gather input from local partners across Washington on the challenges and opportunities they face, and research how other states are integrating climate resilience into their infrastructure efforts. This work will inform recommendations to agencies on strategies and tools to strengthen the integration of climate resilience in state-funded infrastructure programs. An initial review of information learned will be available by spring 2026 and the first round of guidance and tools to support the integration of climate resilience into grant programs will be shared by December 2026.

### **Action 7F: State transportation resilience improvement plan and climate vulnerability assessments**

The Washington State Department of Transportation made significant progress in its work to develop a Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan (TRIP) with the goal of strengthening the resilience of the state’s transportation network to climate impacts. The TRIP will be completed by May 2026 and will provide a prioritized list of resilience improvement projects for

consideration by decision makers, informed by community input and vulnerability assessments. This complements work by the Departments of Transportation, Ecology, and Fish and Wildlife as well as Washington Sea Grant to assess the vulnerability of coastal highways to sea level rise through the [Coastal Transportation Vulnerability & Planning Study](#)<sup>7</sup>. The TRIP will also consider other recently completed vulnerability assessments for Washington State Ferries Terminals, the Interstate 5 corridor, and other parts of the state transportation system.

## **Strategy 8: Improve land management and restoration practices to help ecosystems, habitats, and species adapt to changing conditions.**

### **Action 8H: Implement the regional chapter of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan**

The Puget Sound Partnership completed the [2024 Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan Addendum](#)<sup>8</sup> (Addendum) in December 2024. The Addendum serves as a complementary, focused, and actionable addition to the Regional Chapter of the 2007 Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan. The Addendum will guide Puget Sound regional salmon recovery efforts over the next ten years. The Addendum identifies roles and responsibilities of agencies and organizations to improve accountability, provides direction on which policy initiatives to advance, establishes a regional framework for monitoring and adaptive management, and identifies funding strategies. To implement the Addendum, Partnership staff are developing the 2025-2027 Addendum Implementation Plan to advance 20 actions selected from the Addendum. The 20 actions will focus regional efforts over the next two years, and the Partnership will track implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan's actions. To create the implementation plan, Partnership staff convened agencies and organizations to develop a long-term vision, identify activities they can take over the next two years to advance the vision, and understand how to track their efforts.

### **Action 8I: Interagency shrubsteppe resilience implementation**

The Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) is led by the Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources and the State Conservation Commission to respond to the accelerating loss of shrubsteppe habitat to catastrophic wildfire. WSRRI is aimed at restoring habitat for shrubsteppe-dependent wildlife species and for the people whose livelihoods also depend on that habitat. WSRRI is implementing a 30-year strategy to increase the restoration of habitat and support sustainable working lands management across Eastern Washington's shrubsteppe landscape.

Currently, WSRRI is developing funding guidelines and a solicitation for habitat restoration and wildlife friendly fencing projects that support livestock management on working lands but allow

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<sup>7</sup> <https://wacoastalnetwork.com/transportation-vulnerability-study/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/25d4aea2beb84a5a9d4c7edc7a93ed98/>

for the safe movement of wildlife across landscapes. WSRRI is also creating a ‘hub’ to deliver equipment and materials to landowners and restoration partners to carry out restoration projects in support of wildlife and working lands.

### **Action 8J: Increasing habitat connectivity in Washington State**



Figure 4. The Interstate-90 Wildlife Bridge near Snoqualmie Pass, the largest in North America. Credit – Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

In June 2025, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, in partnership with the Department of Transportation, released the [Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan \(WAHCAP\)](#)<sup>9</sup>. The plan provides a shared framework to support safe wildlife movement, reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions, and build climate resilience into the fabric of Washington’s landscapes and infrastructure.

In a changing climate, the ability of wildlife to move across the landscape is essential to reach food, migrate, or adapt to changing conditions. Without this connectivity, species are more vulnerable to local extinctions, ecosystem function

breaks down, and our natural heritage becomes harder to sustain.

The plan identifies 13 connected landscapes for protection and 157 priority zones where infrastructure improvements (such as wildlife crossings) would yield the greatest co-benefits for human safety and ecosystem function. The plan was developed in close collaboration with Tribes, local governments, and other partners.

Next steps for this work include investing in Tribal capacity and partnership, improving data on recreation use and ecological impacts, and supporting decision tools like TerrAdapt to guide climate-smart connectivity planning.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/habitat-recovery/connectivity/action-plan>

## What Else Did Our Agencies Accomplish in the Past Year?

While actions in the Climate Resilience Strategy represent new efforts and priorities, agencies continue to implement a wide range of existing and ongoing initiatives. These efforts are critical to advancing climate resilient outcomes and ensure the new actions identified in the strategy are built upon and complement the foundation of work already underway.

### Department of Agriculture: Planning for a more resilient agricultural sector.



Figure 5. WSDA Director Derek Sandison inspects machinery at a Washington dairy farm. Credit – Washington State Department of Agriculture

The Washington State Department of Agriculture released the [Climate Resilience Plan for Washington Agriculture](https://agr.wa.gov/climateresiliencewaag)<sup>10</sup> in March 2025. The plan serves as a companion to the state’s Climate Resilience Strategy and proposes 27 key actions to enhance farm resilience, support agricultural innovation, and encourage the adoption of climate-smart practices. It also provides a playbook for institutions that support agriculture, ensuring a coordinated approach across local, state, and federal efforts. Key priorities include:

- Safeguarding operational resilience: Enhancing emergency preparedness, recovery, and response measures to address climate impacts such as drought and extreme weather.
- Supporting agricultural innovation: Fostering sector-wide innovation through research, education, partnerships, and workforce development.
- Encouraging climate-smart practices: Promoting the voluntary adoption of sustainable farming practices that mitigate climate risks and enhance resilience.

The Department of Agriculture used a collaborative process to build the plan including policy and science reviews, stakeholder feedback, and assessments of existing programs. More than 500 farmers, farmworkers, and staff from agricultural organizations shared their experiences, helping the Department of Agriculture shape realistic and impactful strategies.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://agr.wa.gov/climateresiliencewaag>

## Department of Commerce: Enhancing community engagement in local climate planning.



Figure 6. Tribal community members participate in a comprehensive plan workshop in Vancouver hosted by Native American Youth and Family Center in 2025. The nonprofit provided participation stipends and a family-centered and welcoming space to ensure parents with children could participate in the meetings. Credit - Native American Youth and Family Center

Under the Growth Management Act, jurisdictions in Washington must integrate greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience into their comprehensive plans. To support this work, the Department of Commerce awarded \$2 million in Climate Commitment Act funding through its Advancing Meaningful Engagement pilot grant program.

In fiscal years 2023 to 2025, the program supported 24 community organizations to help ensure that overburdened communities and vulnerable populations could effectively participate in local comprehensive plan updates. Funding recipients developed comprehensive engagement approaches to elevate community voices, concerns, and priorities.

The Department of Commerce used lessons learned from this work to create an online toolkit with an animated video, graphic novel, and other resources to help other communities across the state strengthen community engagement in planning efforts related to climate, transportation, housing, land use, and other areas.

## State Conservation Commission: Engaging forest owners to build community resilience



Figure 7. A forest owner from the Tranquil Lane Community in Anatone surveys his Ponderosa pine trees for Mountain Pine Beetle damage as part of a wildfire risk assessment. Credit - Lacy Ausman-Ditto, Asotin County Conservation District

Washington State Conservation Commission's Forest Health and Community Wildfire Resiliency program provides landowners with resources to reduce wildfire risk to homes and property, improve the health and resilience of their lands, and support recovery following wildfire events. As droughts and wildfires become more frequent and severe, this support is critical in protecting people and landscapes.

The state's network of conservation districts provide resources to landowners, including forest stewardship planning, wildfire risk assessments, and financial incentives to implement recommended practices. Together, this work improves forest stand conditions, reduces flammable fuels, and improves the safety of structures and communities. Conservation Districts also collaborate with partners throughout the state to amplify messaging around wildfire safety, preparedness, and recovery.

One of the most important services provided through this program are site visits by conservation district staff to help landowners understand options to manage their property and reduce wildfire risks. Often, connecting with just one landowner leads to working with their neighbors to reach a shared set of goals. For example, engagement by Asotin Conservation District with one forest landowner in Anatone resulted in a neighborhood pilot project that mitigated a pine beetle outbreak, reduced hazardous fuels around homes, improved evacuation routes, and developed habitat for the dusky grouse which had been absent and subsequently returned to the neighborhood.

## Department of Ecology: Embedding climate resilience into shoreline regulations.



Figure 8. On Dec. 27, 2022, king tides caused coastal flooding on parts of Day Island in Tacoma. Credit – Washington State Department of Ecology.

Ecology is updating the rules that implement the Shoreline Management Act. Climate resilience is a major focus for this rulemaking, as directed by the Legislature in 2023. Following extensive engagement, Ecology released a [preliminary draft rule](#)<sup>11</sup> for informal public comment on June 16, 2025. The preliminary draft includes a new section establishing a required process for sea level rise planning, which would require local

governments to analyze vulnerability, establish a hazard area, and manage development to reduce risk and protect the shoreline environment. In addition, the draft rules include a new section on protecting channel migration zones, a stronger emphasis on riparian management and vegetation conservation, and additional requirements around shoreline stabilization. These updates will guide how local governments incorporate climate risks into their Shoreline Master Programs which shape land use planning and regulate development along shorelines. Ecology will continue to engage with Tribes, local governments, partner agencies, and the public throughout the rulemaking process. Ecology anticipates adopting the final rule in summer 2026.

## Emergency Management Division: Supporting Washington’s coastal communities in preparing for winter storms.

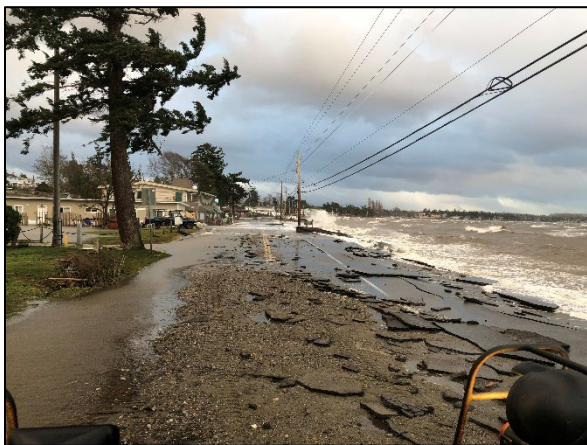


Figure 9. Flooding and road damage following a winter storm in Whatcom County. Credit – Emergency Management Division

In 2024, the Emergency Management Division in the Military Department and Washington’s Coastal Hazards Organizational Resilience Team (COHORT) held a Winter Storms Forum to bring the science, response, and recovery of winter weather events to community leaders along Washington’s Pacific Coast and Puget Sound. The Winter Storms Forum brought together public utilities, city administrators, Tribal staff, and state agencies to share knowledge, highlight tools and resources, and strengthen local capacity for storm preparation, response, and recovery.

The COHORT is an interagency team from the Department of Ecology, Washington Sea Grant,

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<sup>11</sup> <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/laws-rules-rulemaking/rulemaking/wac-173-26-27-shoreline-management-act>

the Emergency Management Division, and Washington State University Extension. The COHORT works to advance coastal resilience efforts across Washington’s 15 coastal counties. To date, the COHORT has conducted over 350 engagement events, reaching over 5,500 community members, and supported successful grant proposals that have secured over \$85 million in federal funding, leading to 36 coastal resilience projects.

## **Department of Fish and Wildlife: Protecting public access for outdoor recreation in a changing climate.**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) recently completed a Climate Vulnerability Assessment of its publicly accessible water access sites to better understand where climate-related threats are most likely to disrupt infrastructure and public access.

The pilot phase focused on the North Puget Sound region. Due to budget and time constraints, the analysis primarily focused on riverine sites and did not fully evaluate marine sites or marine-related climate impacts such as sea level rise. The study examined flooding, low streamflows, and erosion potential.

The project combined climate projections with site-specific data, such as infrastructure condition and location, to assess the vulnerability of water access sites. Results of this assessment will guide capital planning efforts and direct resources at the highest-risk sites to protect public access and safety. This work also produced a replicable framework that can be used in other regions in the future.

## **Department of Health: Improving indoor air quality for rural Washington schools at risk from extreme heat and wildfire smoke.**

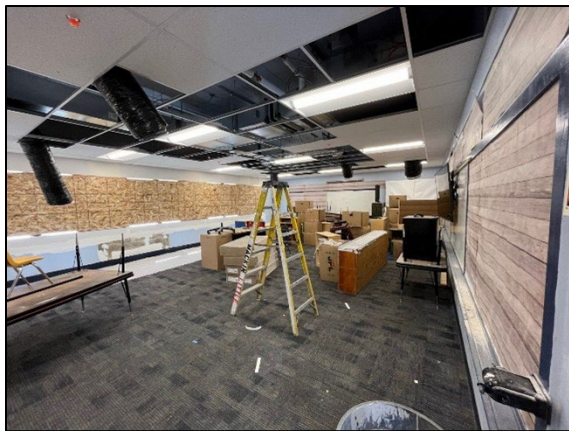


Figure 10. HVAC duct upgrades within a classroom at Kettle Falls Elementary School in Kettle Falls, WA. Credit – Apollo Solutions Group.

Children are especially vulnerable to the health impacts of wildfire smoke and extreme heat. As these events become more frequent and severe, many schools in Washington are experiencing poor indoor air quality and high indoor temperatures. These conditions can negatively affect the comfort, health, and learning potential of students and staff.

To address these risks, the Department of Health launched the School Climate + Indoor Air Quality Grant Program to support HVAC upgrades at schools receiving Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction [small school district funding](https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/school-buildings-facilities/grants-funding-resources-non-scap/small-school-district-modernization-grant)<sup>12</sup>.

From 2024-25, the project funded and completed upgrades to HVAC systems and other infrastructure in five rural, high-risk school districts. By upgrading air filtration, cooling and ventilation, the project aims to improve the resilience and safety of school buildings during smoke and heat events, provide cleaner indoor air quality year-round, and enhance schools' capability to serve as cooling centers for the broader community. Partners at the University of Washington are working with the schools to evaluate

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<sup>12</sup> <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/school-buildings-facilities/grants-funding-resources-non-scap/small-school-district-modernization-grant>

the effects of HVAC upgrades on each school’s indoor air quality and temperatures, as well as student and staff comfort.

### **Department of Natural Resources: Adapting our forests to wildfire risks.**



Figure 11. Before and after forest health treatments in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Credit – Washington State Department of Natural Resources

In eastern Washington, the Department of Natural Resources and partners are working collaboratively to help fire-prone forests adapt to a changing climate. Through implementation of the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan for Eastern Washington, they are enhancing forest resilience to wildfires and drought.

Located on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, the Upper Wenatchee Pilot Project is a great example of this work. This landscape-scale project was developed, implemented, and monitored in collaboration with partners and aims to restore

forest health and resiliency by reestablishing forest structure, returning fire to the landscape, improving wildlife habitat, and improving watershed function.

With funding from the Legislature, the state is leveraging other funds to increase the pace and scale of implementation through a Forest Resilience Bond led by Blue Forest and Chelan County Natural Resources Department. A Forest Resilience Bond is a public-private partnership that enables private capital to finance forest restoration activities that reduce fire risk and deliver environmental and social co-benefits. The activities focus on the strategic removal of excess vegetation, land regeneration and protection, and fuels treatments – including thinning, prescribed burning and pruning, as well as watershed health improvements. The Upper Wenatchee Forest Resilience Bond project includes around 5,200 acres of fuels reduction and accompanying aquatic restoration activities across a 15,000-acre footprint, protecting communities, infrastructure, and habitat.

## Department of Transportation (WSDOT): Implementing nature-based solutions to restore habitats and protect infrastructure.



Figure 12. Work at State Route 105 to address significant coastal erosion. The completed project includes a wave-absorbing barrier that mimics a natural cobble beach. Credit – Washington State Department of Transportation

WSDOT considers climate change impacts and infrastructure vulnerabilities when planning and designing transportation system improvements. The agency also constructs nature-based, fish-friendly resilience projects at locations with chronic flooding and erosion through its Chronic Environmental Deficiencies Program.

In summer 2025, WSDOT constructed a resilience and restoration project at Graveyard Spit along State Route 105 on the northern shore of Willapa Bay. Components of this work include nature-based solutions such as raising the existing dune and building a wave-absorbing barrier that mimics a natural cobble beach. The project will protect the community from rising sea

levels and severe coastal erosion, preserve habitat for endangered wildlife, and maintain a critical transportation corridor to the Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation. Funding for this work came from state and federal grants.

WSDOT's largest investment in resilience this year continues to be in fish passage projects, like the State Route 3 Chico Creek project completed last year that restored access to 22 miles of potential spawning and rearing habitat and addressed debris racking and chronic erosion of the roadway embankment. The new bridge was designed to accommodate increasing streamflows and tides, ensuring it will last at least 75 years and provide reliable transportation for travelers and nearby communities.

In 2025, the Legislature authorized an additional \$1.1 billion over six years for WSDOT's fish passage work. While this falls short of the approximately \$5 billion in additional funds needed to meet the deadlines and requirements in the 2013 federal court injunction, it allows efforts to continue while WSDOT works with state leaders, Tribes, and partners on long-term funding solutions.

# How Are Budget Challenges and Federal Upheaval Shaping Our Work?

## State budget challenges

The state's operating budget deficit shortfall, approximately \$14 billion over four years, limited the resources available to all state agencies, including those needed to support new agency actions identified in the Climate Resilience Strategy. In addition to constraining new investments, the tight budget environment created challenges for sustaining existing climate resilience efforts. Several agencies received budget reductions for the 2025–27 biennium, affecting or eliminating core program functions. Furthermore, some agencies that received funding to implement actions in the Climate Resilience Strategy were awarded one-time resources rather than ongoing funding. We know that continuing this work in a meaningful way will require more sustainable support in the future.

Select impacts include:

- The Department of Agriculture's Climate Commitment Act funding was decreased by 87%, which includes the elimination of its lead climate position and the Compost Reimbursement Program. In its first two years of operation, the program supported over 200 farmers in applying compost, benefiting the waste management industry, improving soil health, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Emergency Management Division received funding cuts to its Disaster Resilience Unit, including the elimination of two staff positions. This in turn limits the agency's ability to conduct climate-related hazard analyses and risk assessments for vulnerable communities.
- The State Conservation Commission received a 50% funding decrease for its forest health program that supports landowners with reducing wildfire risks. These ongoing reductions present long-term challenges in providing sustained support for landowners. Additionally, the Disaster Assistance Program did not receive funding for the 2025-27 biennium.
- The Department of Fish and Wildlife received reductions to several core program areas that are foundational to its climate resilience work. Reduced funding will slow the pace of wildfire risk reduction treatments, efforts to address low streamflows, implementation of habitat restoration projects, monitoring of fisheries health, public land access for recreation, and the agency's ability to respond to wildlife diseases such as avian influenza.
- The Department of Health received a 69% reduction in funding for climate and health related programs and grants impacting resilience efforts for schools, community-based organizations, and local health jurisdictions. Funding for Foundational Public Health

Services that supports climate and health resilience efforts was reduced for both the Department of Health and local health jurisdictions, impacting state and local capacity.

- The Department of Natural Resources received a 50% reduction (\$125 million) in its dedicated funding for forest health, community resilience, and wildfire response. This results in fewer forest health treatments conducted by DNR and lower capacity for technical assistance on wildfire response and forest restoration for at-risk communities.

## **Federal policy challenges**

The challenges posed by the state budget were further compounded by a dramatic shift in the federal government’s approach to climate change and climate resilience under the Trump administration. While the work of state agencies is funded and directed by the Legislature and Governor, federal dollars and other resources often help advance and support agency programs and resilience projects as well. Funding, laws and rules, and scientific data and information are essential to the work of our agency partners.

Since January, many of our agency partners have seen previously awarded federal grants unlawfully frozen or revoked, and the firing of federal scientists and staff has restricted our ability to implement climate resilience work in partnership with federal agencies. While these disruptions have hampered state agency efforts, the greatest impacts have been felt by Tribes, local governments, and community organizations. Much of the federal funding awarded to the state is directly passed through to these communities to improve infrastructure, restore habitat, provide technical assistance, engage people, and support other resilience activities and projects.

Select impacts include:

- The Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington saw its Northwest Climate Resilience Collaborative funding cut in May 2025. This program represented 25% of the work conducted by the Climate Impacts Group and was its largest source of funding to work with rural communities and Tribes in Washington and other northwest states.
- Numerous, critical federal datasets have been removed from official government websites. These include EJScreen used for environmental justice mapping, past versions of the National Climate Assessments, and entire websites like “climate.gov”. These resources provided valuable information that were instrumental in guiding state agency efforts.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) removed climate and equity requirements from its local hazard mitigation planning guidance, complicating climate planning efforts led by the Department of Commerce. State law requires jurisdictions to include climate resilience in their comprehensive plans. Jurisdictions may meet this

requirement by updating their hazard mitigation plan and adopting it by reference in their comprehensive plan. However, since climate and equity elements are no longer required by FEMA, jurisdictions following this approach must develop and adopt supplemental climate resilience policies to meet state standards. This makes adopting a hazard mitigation plan into a comprehensive plan less efficient for local governments across the state.

- The Federal Highway Administration now requires the removal of climate and environmental justice considerations from planning and project documents, following the rescission of National Environmental Policy Act implementing regulations. However, these considerations remain mandatory under state law and regulations. As a result, separate state-level documentation will need to be developed for transportation projects and studies, creating inefficiencies and increasing the risk of project delays.
- In November 2024, western Washington was hit by a bomb cyclone that caused \$34 million in damages across six counties. The Emergency Management Division submitted a request for a disaster declaration to FEMA that was rejected by the White House on two separate occasions in early 2025. This left the state with no federal resources to support recovery efforts for impacted individuals and communities.
- FEMA also terminated the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program that supported states and local governments with hazard mitigation projects that reduced risks from climate-driven natural hazards. One impacted project was an \$80 million grant to support levee construction in Hoquiam and Aberdeen to protect against severe flooding for vulnerable and at-risk communities.
- The Department of Health has been impacted by the cancellation of several federal grant programs and policy rollbacks that supported its climate work. These include support for the CDC's Climate and Health Program and the Office of Climate and Health Equity at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Foundational federal climate science has also been affected, including the defunding of the National Climate Assessment (NCA) and firing all staff and experts who had begun working on the 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment. Agencies relied heavily on the fifth NCA to inform Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy. The Trump Administration has also proposed dramatic reorganizations and defunding major parts of agencies like NOAA and EPA, particularly focused on scientific data and modeling that involves data on water, weather and climate science. Losses in access to credible federal scientific information will make further updates to the state's strategy more difficult. It will also put more pressure on the state to fill gaps in data that we rely on for decision-making.

## What's Next for This Work?

While our agencies have made significant progress in implementing the Climate Resilience Strategy in the past year, there is more work to be done.

### **Governance Structure**

Establishing the Interagency Climate Resilience Coordinating Council through Action 1A will be a key priority for agencies in the coming year. Our agencies will continue to support collaboration that promotes effective, efficient, and coordinated implementation of the Climate Resilience Strategy.

Following our kickoff discussion in September, agency leaders will reconvene in fall 2025 for an in-person meeting to formalize the Council's structure and identify shared priorities. The Council will be co-led by Ecology Director Casey Sixkiller and Commissioner of Public Lands Dave Upthegrove. This forum will build on the progress our agencies made in developing the strategy and will provide ongoing leadership and coordination to advance climate resilience efforts across state government, ensuring strategic alignment, transparency, and accountability in our collective efforts.

### **2026 Supplemental Legislative Session**

Agencies are also preparing for the 2026 legislative session, with a focus on maintaining funding for existing climate resilience efforts given the ongoing state budget challenges. While the Climate Resilience Strategy identifies a continued need for new programs and actions, current budget challenges require agencies to prioritize ongoing work. Support for this ongoing work is essential to protect communities and infrastructure, strengthen our agricultural economy, and ensure a healthy and resilient environment.

Despite these limitations, our agencies can continue to advance climate resilience through existing resources and partnerships across agencies and with Tribal and local partners. At the Department of Ecology, for example, staff from multiple programs are working to embed and support climate resilience across the agency including in grantmaking and environmental justice initiatives.

Additionally, the Interagency Climate Resilience Coordinating Council, described above, can help us better address issues like extreme heat and wildfires and improve how we advance more climate-resilient infrastructure. This work is critical to improving how we serve Washingtonians more effectively and efficiently, while helping them adapt and prepare for climate change. While this cross-agency coordination is important, maintaining baseline funding from the Legislature is essential to ensuring our agencies can continue to make progress towards Washington's shared climate resilience vision and goals.

Though most partner agencies will not be seeking additional funding for climate resilience programs, a notable exception is for forest health and wildfire preparedness.

The Department of Natural Resources will seek full funding for its wildfire response and forest health activities. In 2025, the Legislature funded half of the \$125 million committed by state law to support this work. This shortfall has presented significant challenges to the agency, limiting its ability to carry out necessary work to reduce wildfire risks and hazards. Reduced funding levels will require the agency to discontinue funding for community organizations engaged in landowner outreach and implementation of forest health activities. The agency will also be limited in its ability to provide refurbished surplus firefighting equipment to local fire districts. Together, these impacts will restrict the ability of the agency to prepare for and respond to increasing wildfire risks. Securing the remaining funding for this work is the Department of Natural Resources' top legislative priority for the 2026 legislative session.

The Department of Natural Resources will also be seeking \$3 million for its Urban Forestry Grant program. The program provides technical, educational, and financial support to plant and sustain trees and urban forests across the state.

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) will be seeking additional funding for its Forest Health and Community Wildfire Resiliency program. In the FY 2023-2025 biennium, this program received \$15 million in total funding, with \$5 million intended to be ongoing funding for future biennia. However, the program was appropriated only \$2.5 million for the FY 2025-2027 biennium. SCC will propose to restore funding back to the previous ongoing level during the supplemental session. SCC will also seek to restore and enhance funding for its Conservation Technical Assistance program and secure funding to replace outdated paper-based systems with more efficient technological solutions to support grant and funding management.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is requesting \$2.6 million per fiscal year to restore \$6 million in biennial funding for forest health and fuel reduction, which was reduced to \$1.2 million in the 2025-2027 operating budget. Current funding is insufficient to sustain thinning and prescribed burn treatments that protect ecological health, habitat, and communities from wildfire. Restoring full funding will enable WDFW to complete mandated cultural resource reviews, continue critical forest health projects, and maintain prescribed burn crews that treat 4,000 acres per biennium.