

**Chapter 43.155 RCW
PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS**

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RCW 43.155.010 Legislative findings and policy. The legislature finds that there exists in the state of Washington over four billion dollars worth of critical projects for the planning, acquisition, construction, repair, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of streets and roads, bridges, water systems, and storm and sanitary sewage systems. The December, 1983 Washington state public works report prepared by the planning and community affairs agency documented that local governments expect to be capable of financing over two billion dollars worth of the costs of those critical projects but will not be able to fund nearly half of the documented needs.

The legislature further finds that Washington's local governments have unmet financial needs for solid waste disposal, including recycling, and encourages the board to make an equitable geographic distribution of the funds.

It is the policy of the state of Washington to encourage self-reliance by local governments in meeting their public works needs and to assist in the financing of critical public works projects by making loans, grants, financing guarantees, and technical assistance available to local governments for these projects. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 1; 1996 c 168 s 1; 1985 c 446 s 7.]

RCW 43.155.020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Board" means the public works board created in RCW 43.155.030.

(2) "Capital facility plan" means a capital facility plan required by the growth management act under chapter 36.70A RCW or, for local governments not fully planning under the growth management act, a plan required by the public works board.

(3) "Department" means the department of commerce.

(4) "Financing guarantees" means the pledge of money in the public works assistance account, or money to be received by the public works assistance account, to the repayment of all or a portion of the principal of or interest on obligations issued by local governments to finance public works projects.

(5) "Local governments" means cities, towns, counties, special purpose districts, and any other municipal corporations or quasi-municipal corporations in the state excluding school districts and port districts.

(6) "Public works project" means a project of a local government for the planning, acquisition, construction, repair, reconstruction, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of streets and roads, bridges, water systems, or storm and sanitary sewage systems, lead remediation of drinking water systems, and solid waste facilities, including recycling facilities and composting and other organic materials management facilities. A planning project may include the compilation of biological, hydrological, or other data on a county, drainage basin, or region necessary to develop a base of information for a capital facility plan.

(7) "Solid waste or recycling project" means remedial actions necessary to bring abandoned or closed landfills into compliance with regulatory requirements and the repair, restoration, and replacement of existing solid waste transfer, recycling facilities, and landfill projects limited to the opening of landfill cells that are in existing and permitted landfills.

(8) "Technical assistance" means training and other services provided to local governments to: (a) Help such local governments plan, apply, and qualify for loans, grants, and financing guarantees from the board, and (b) help local governments improve their ability to plan for, finance, acquire, construct, repair, replace, rehabilitate, and maintain public facilities.

(9) "Value planning" means a uniform approach to assist in decision making through systematic evaluation of potential alternatives to solving an identified problem. [2022 c 180 s 503; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 2; 2009 c 565 s 33; 2001 c 131 s 1; 1996 c 168 s 2; 1995 c 399 s 85; 1985 c 446 s 8.]

Findings—Intent—Scope of authority of chapter 180, Laws of 2022—2022 c 180: See notes following RCW 70A.205.007.

RCW 43.155.030 Public works board created. (1) The public works board is hereby created.

(2) The board shall be composed of thirteen members appointed by the governor for terms of four years, except that five members initially shall be appointed for terms of two years. The board shall

include: (a) Three members, two of whom shall be elected officials and one shall be a public works manager, appointed from a list of at least six persons nominated by the association of Washington cities or its successor; (b) three members, two of whom shall be elected officials and one shall be a public works manager, appointed from a list of at least six persons nominated by the Washington state association of counties or its successor; (c) three members appointed from a list of at least six persons nominated jointly by the Washington public utility districts association and a state association of water-sewer districts, or their successors; and (d) four members appointed from the general public. In appointing the four general public members, the governor shall endeavor to balance the geographical composition of the board and to include members with special expertise in relevant fields such as public finance, architecture and civil engineering, and public works construction. The governor shall appoint one of the general public members of the board as chair. The term of the chair shall coincide with the term of the governor.

(3) Staff support to the board shall be provided by the department.

(4) Members of the board shall receive no compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses under RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(5) If a vacancy on the board occurs by death, resignation, or otherwise, the governor shall fill the vacant position for the unexpired term. Each vacancy in a position appointed from lists provided by the associations under subsection (2) of this section shall be filled from a list of at least three persons nominated by the relevant association or associations. Any members of the board, appointive or otherwise, may be removed by the governor for cause in accordance with RCW 43.06.070 and 43.06.080. [1999 c 153 s 58; 1985 c 446 s 9.]

Part headings not law—1999 c 153: See note following RCW 57.04.050.

RCW 43.155.040 General powers of the board. The board may:

(1) Accept from any state or federal agency, loans or grants for the planning or financing of any public works project and enter into agreements with any such agency concerning the loans or grants;

(2) Provide technical assistance to local governments;

(3) Accept any gifts, grants, or loans of funds, property, or financial or other aid in any form from any other source on any terms and conditions which are not in conflict with this chapter;

(4) Develop a program that provides grants and additional assistance to leverage federal programs, and other opportunities to target deeper financial assistance to communities with economic distress or projects that would result in rate increases to residential utility rates that exceed a determined percentage of median household income;

(5) Adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW as necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter;

(6) Do all acts and things necessary or convenient to carry out the powers expressly granted or implied under this chapter. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 4; 1985 c 446 s 10.]

RCW 43.155.050 Public works assistance account. (1) The public works assistance account is hereby established in the state treasury. Money may be placed in the public works assistance account from the proceeds of bonds when authorized by the legislature or from any other lawful source. Money in the public works assistance account shall be used to make loans and grants and to give financial guarantees to local governments for public works projects. Moneys in the account may also be appropriated or transferred to the water pollution control revolving fund and the drinking water assistance account to provide for state match requirements under federal law. Moneys in the account may be transferred to the move ahead WA account to provide support of public works projects funded in the move ahead WA program. Not more than 20 percent of the biennial capital budget appropriation to the public works board from this account may be expended or obligated for preconstruction loans and grants, emergency loans and grants, or loans and grants for capital facility planning under this chapter. Not more than 10 percent of the biennial capital budget appropriation to the public works board from this account may be expended or obligated as grants for preconstruction, emergency, capital facility planning, and construction projects. During the 2017-2019 and 2019-2021 fiscal biennia, the legislature may appropriate moneys from the account for activities related to rural economic development, the growth management act, the aviation revitalization loan program, the community economic revitalization board broadband program, and the voluntary stewardship program. During the 2021-2023 and 2023-2025 fiscal biennia, the legislature may appropriate moneys from the account for activities related to the community aviation revitalization board. During the 2019-2021 fiscal biennia, the legislature may direct the state treasurer to make transfers of moneys in the public works assistance account to the education legacy trust account. During the 2019-2021 and 2021-2023 fiscal biennia, the legislature may direct the state treasurer to make transfers of moneys in the public works assistance account to the statewide broadband account. The legislature may appropriate moneys from the public works assistance account for activities related to the voluntary stewardship program, rural economic development, and the growth management act. During the 2021-2023 biennium, the legislature may appropriate moneys from the account for projects identified in section 1033, chapter 296, Laws of 2022. During the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, the legislature may appropriate moneys from the public works assistance account for an evaluation of the costs of relocating public utilities related to fish barrier removal projects. During the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, the legislature may appropriate moneys from the account for activities related to developing a data dashboard to map investments made by the public works board, the department of commerce, the department of health, the department of ecology, the department of transportation, the transportation improvement board, and by board partners to the system improvement team created in RCW 43.155.150.

(2) For fiscal year 2024 through fiscal year 2038, the state treasurer must transfer from the public works assistance account to the move ahead WA account created in RCW 46.68.510 \$57,000,000 each fiscal year in four equal quarterly transfers. [2023 c 475 s 932; 2023 c 474 s 8037. Prior: 2022 c 296 s 7009; 2022 c 182 s 302; 2022 c 157 s 15; prior: 2021 c 334 s 979; 2021 c 332 s 7031; prior: 2019 c 415 s 972; 2019 c 413 s 7033; prior: 2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 5; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 1 s 974; prior: 2015 3rd sp.s. c 4 s 959; 2015 3rd sp.s. c 3 s 7032; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 4 s 983; 2012 2nd sp.s. c 2 s 6004; 2011 1st

sp.s. c 50 s 951; prior: 2010 1st sp.s. c 37 s 932; 2010 1st sp.s. c 36 s 6007; (2009 c 564 s 940 expired June 30, 2011); (2008 c 328 s 6002 expired June 30, 2011); 2007 c 520 s 6037; (2007 c 520 s 6036 expired June 30, 2011); prior: 2005 c 488 s 925; (2005 c 425 s 4 expired June 30, 2011); 2001 c 131 s 2; prior: 1995 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 918; 1995 c 376 s 11; 1993 sp.s. c 24 s 921; 1985 c 471 s 8.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2023 c 474 s 8037 and by 2023 c 475 s 932, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Effective date—2023 c 475: See note following RCW 16.76.030.

Conflict with federal requirements—Effective date—2023 c 474: See notes following RCW 28A.320.330.

Effective date—2022 c 296: See note following RCW 43.63A.125.

Intent—Effective date—2022 c 182: See notes following RCW 70A.65.240.

Conflict with federal requirements—Effective date—2021 c 334: See notes following RCW 43.79.555.

Effective date—2021 c 332: See note following RCW 43.19.501.

Effective date—2019 c 415: See note following RCW 28B.20.476.

Effective date—2019 c 413: See note following RCW 28B.15.210.

Effective date—2017 3rd sp.s. c 1: See note following RCW 43.41.455.

Effective dates—2015 3rd sp.s. c 4: See note following RCW 28B.15.069.

Effective date—2015 3rd sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 43.160.080.

Effective dates—2013 2nd sp.s. c 4: See note following RCW 2.68.020.

Effective date—2012 2nd sp.s. c 2: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 23, 2012]." [2012 2nd sp.s. c 2 s 6013.]

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 50 s 951: "Section 951 of this act takes effect June 30, 2011." [2011 1st sp.s. c 50 s 952.]

Effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 37: See note following RCW 13.06.050.

Effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 36: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 4, 2010]." [2010 1st sp.s. c 36 s 6018.]

Expiration date—2009 c 564 s 940: "Section 940 of this act expires June 30, 2011." [2009 c 564 s 962.]

Effective date—2009 c 564: See note following RCW 2.68.020.

Expiration date—2008 c 328 s 6002: "Section 6002 of this act expires June 30, 2011." [2008 c 328 s 6018.]

Part headings not law—2008 c 328: "Part headings in this act are not any part of the law." [2008 c 328 s 6020.]

Severability—2008 c 328: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2008 c 328 s 6021.]

Effective date—2008 c 328: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 1, 2008]." [2008 c 328 s 6022.]

Expiration date—2007 c 520 s 6036: "Section 6036 of this act expires June 30, 2011." [2007 c 520 s 6039.]

Part headings not law—Severability—Effective dates—2007 c 520: See notes following RCW 43.19.125.

Part headings not law—Severability—Effective dates—2005 c 488: See notes following RCW 28B.50.360.

Finding—2005 c 425: "The legislature has and continues to recognize the vital importance of economic development to the health and prosperity of Washington state as indicated in RCW 43.160.010, *43.155.070(4)(g), 43.163.005, and 43.168.010. The legislature finds that current economic development programs and funding, which are primarily low-interest loan programs, can be enhanced by creating a grant program to assist with public infrastructure projects that directly stimulate community and economic development by supporting the creation of new jobs or the retention of existing jobs." [2005 c 425 s 1.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 43.155.070 was amended by 2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 9, deleting subsection (4)(g).

Expiration date—2005 c 425: "This act expires June 30, 2011." [2005 c 425 s 6.]

Severability—2005 c 425: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the

remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2005 c 425 s 7.]

Severability—Effective date—1995 2nd sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 19.118.110.

Findings—1995 c 376: See note following RCW 70A.100.060.

Severability—Effective dates—1993 sp.s. c 24: See notes following RCW 28A.310.020.

Severability—Effective date—1985 c 471: See notes following RCW 82.04.260.

RCW 43.155.060 Public works financing powers—Establishment of interest rates—Competitive bids on projects. (1) In order to aid the financing of public works projects, the board may:

(a) Make loans or grants to local governments from the public works assistance account or other funds and accounts for the purpose of assisting local governments in financing public works projects. Money received from local governments in repayment of loans made under this section shall be paid into the public works assistance account for uses consistent with this chapter.

(b) Pledge money in the public works assistance account, or money to be received by the public works assistance account, to the repayment of all or a portion of the principal of or interest on obligations issued by local governments to finance public works projects. The board shall not pledge any amount greater than the sum of money in the public works assistance account plus money to be received from the payment of the debt service on loans made from that account, nor shall the board pledge the faith and credit or the taxing power of the state or any agency or subdivision thereof to the repayment of obligations issued by any local government.

(c) Create such subaccounts in the public works assistance account as the board deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

(d) Provide a method for the allocation of loans, grants, and financing guarantees and the provision of technical assistance under this chapter.

(2) When establishing interest rates for loan programs authorized in this chapter for projects which are supported by a rate base of at least fifty thousand equivalent residential units, the board must base interest rates on the average daily market interest rate for tax-exempt municipal bonds as published in the bond buyer's index for the period from sixty to thirty days before the start of the application cycle.

(a) For projects with a repayment period between five and twenty years, the rate must be fifty percent of the market rate.

(b) For projects with a repayment period under five years, the rate must be twenty-five percent of the market rate.

(c) For any year in which the average daily market interest rate for tax-exempt municipal bonds for the period from sixty to thirty days before the start of an application cycle is nine percent or greater, the board may cap interest rates at four percent for projects

with a repayment period between five and twenty years and at two percent for projects with a repayment period under five years.

(d) The board may also provide reduced interest rates, extended repayment periods, or grants for projects that meet financial hardship criteria as measured by the affordability index or similar standard measure of financial hardship. The board may provide reduced interest rates, extended repayment periods, or grants for projects that are supported by a rate base of less than fifty thousand equivalent residential units.

(3) All local public works projects aided in whole or in part under the provisions of this chapter shall be put out for competitive bids, except for emergency public works under RCW 43.155.065 for which the recipient jurisdiction shall comply with this requirement to the extent feasible and practicable. The competitive bids called for shall be administered in the same manner as all other public works projects put out for competitive bidding by the local governmental entity aided under this chapter. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 6; 1988 c 93 s 2; 1985 c 446 s 11.]

RCW 43.155.065 Emergency public works projects. The board may make low-interest or interest-free loans or grants to local governments for emergency public works projects. Emergency public works projects shall include the construction, repair, reconstruction, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of a public water system that is in violation of health and safety standards and is being operated by a local government on a temporary basis. The loans or grants may be used to help fund all or part of an emergency public works project less any reimbursement from any of the following sources: (1) Federal disaster or emergency funds, including funds from the federal emergency management agency; (2) state disaster or emergency funds; (3) insurance settlements; or (4) litigation. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 7; 2001 c 131 s 3; 1990 c 133 s 7; 1988 c 93 s 1.]

Findings—Severability—1990 c 133: See notes following RCW 36.94.140.

RCW 43.155.068 Loans or grants for preconstruction activities.

(1) The board may make loans or grants to local governments for preconstruction activities on public works projects before the legislature approves the construction phase of the project. Preconstruction activities include design, engineering, bid-document preparation, environmental studies, right-of-way acquisition, value planning, and other preliminary phases of public works projects as determined by the board. The purpose of the loans and grants authorized in this section is to accelerate the completion of public works projects by allowing preconstruction activities to be performed before the appropriation for the construction phase of the project by the legislature.

(2) Projects receiving loans or grants for preconstruction activities under this section must be evaluated using the priority process and factors in RCW 43.155.070. The receipt of a loan or grant for preconstruction activities does not ensure the receipt of a construction loan or grant for the project under this chapter. Construction loans or grants for projects receiving a loan or grant

for preconstruction activities under this section are subject to legislative appropriation under RCW 43.155.070(7). The board shall adopt a single application process for local governments seeking both a loan or grant for preconstruction activities under this section and a construction loan for the project. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 8; 2001 c 131 s 4; 1995 c 363 s 2.]

Finding—Purpose—1995 c 363: "The legislature finds that there continues to exist a great need for capital projects to plan, acquire, design, construct, and repair local government streets, roads, bridges, water systems, and storm and sanitary sewage systems. It is the purpose of this act to accelerate the construction of these projects under the public works assistance program." [1995 c 363 s 1.]

RCW 43.155.070 Eligibility, priority, limitations, and exceptions—Report.

(1) To qualify for financial assistance under this chapter the board must determine that a local government meets all of the following conditions:

(a) The city or county must be imposing a tax under chapter 82.46 RCW at a rate of at least one-quarter of one percent;

(b) The local government must have developed a capital facility plan; and

(c) The local government must be using all local revenue sources which are reasonably available for funding public works, taking into consideration local employment and economic factors.

(2) Except where necessary to address a public health need or substantial environmental degradation, a county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040 may not receive financial assistance under this chapter unless it has adopted a comprehensive plan, including a capital facilities plan element, and development regulations as required by RCW 36.70A.040. This subsection does not require any county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040 to adopt a comprehensive plan or development regulations before requesting or receiving financial assistance under this chapter if such request is made before the expiration of the time periods specified in RCW 36.70A.040. A county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040 that has not adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations within the time periods specified in RCW 36.70A.040 may apply for and receive financial assistance under this chapter if the comprehensive plan and development regulations are adopted as required by RCW 36.70A.040 before executing a contractual agreement for financial assistance with the board.

(3) In considering awarding financial assistance for public facilities to special districts requesting funding for a proposed facility located in a county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040, the board must consider whether the county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040 in whose planning jurisdiction the proposed facility is located has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by RCW 36.70A.040.

(4) (a) The board must develop a process to prioritize applications and funding of loans and grants for public works projects submitted by local governments. The board must consider, at a minimum and in any order, the following factors in prioritizing projects:

(i) Whether the project is critical in nature and would affect the health and safety of many people;

(ii) The extent to which the project leverages other funds;

(iii) The extent to which the project is ready to proceed to construction;

(iv) Whether the project is located in an area of high unemployment, compared to the average state unemployment;

(v) Whether the project promotes the sustainable use of resources and environmental quality, as applicable;

(vi) Whether the project consolidates or regionalizes systems;

(vii) Whether the project encourages economic development through mixed-use and mixed income development consistent with chapter 36.70A RCW;

(viii) Whether the system is being well-managed in the present and for long-term sustainability;

(ix) Achieving equitable distribution of funds by geography and population;

(x) The extent to which the project meets the following state policy objectives:

(A) Efficient use of state resources;

(B) Preservation and enhancement of health and safety;

(C) Abatement of pollution and protection of the environment;

(D) Creation of new, family-wage jobs, and avoidance of shifting existing jobs from one Washington state community to another;

(E) Fostering economic development consistent with chapter 36.70A RCW;

(F) Efficiency in delivery of goods and services and transportation; and

(G) Reduction of the overall cost of public infrastructure;

(xi) Whether the applicant sought or is seeking funding for the project from other sources; and

(xii) Other criteria that the board considers necessary to achieve the purposes of this chapter.

(b) Before September 1, 2018, and each year thereafter, the board must develop and submit a report regarding the construction loans and grants to the office of financial management and appropriate fiscal committees of the senate and house of representatives. The report must include:

(i) The total number of applications and amount of funding requested for public works projects;

(ii) A list and description of projects approved in the preceding fiscal year with project scores against the board's prioritization criteria;

(iii) The total amount of loan and grants disbursements made from the public works assistance account in the preceding fiscal year;

(iv) The total amount of loan repayments in the preceding fiscal year for outstanding loans from the public works assistance account;

(v) The total amount of loan repayments due for outstanding loans for each fiscal year over the following ten-year period; and

(vi) The total amount of funds obligated and timing of when the funds were obligated in the preceding fiscal year.

(c) The maximum amount of funding that the board may provide for any jurisdiction is ten million dollars per biennium.

(5) Existing debt or financial obligations of local governments may not be refinanced under this chapter. Each local government applicant must provide documentation of attempts to secure additional local or other sources of funding for each public works project for which financial assistance is sought under this chapter.

(6) Before September 1st of each year, the board must develop and submit to the appropriate fiscal committees of the senate and house of representatives a description of the loans and grants made under RCW 43.155.065 and 43.155.068.

(7) The board may not sign contracts or otherwise financially obligate funds from the public works assistance account before the legislature has appropriated funds to the board for the purpose of funding public works projects under this chapter.

(8) To qualify for loans, grants, or pledges for solid waste or recycling facilities under this chapter, a city or county must demonstrate that the solid waste or recycling facility is consistent with and necessary to implement the comprehensive solid waste management plan adopted by the city or county under chapter 70A.205 RCW.

(9) After January 1, 2010, any project designed to address the effects of stormwater or wastewater on Puget Sound may be funded under this section only if the project is not in conflict with the action agenda developed by the Puget Sound partnership under RCW 90.71.310.

(10) For projects involving repair, replacement, or improvement of a wastewater treatment plant or other public works facility for which an investment grade efficiency audit is reasonably obtainable, the public works board must require as a contract condition that the project sponsor undertake an investment grade efficiency audit. The project sponsor may finance the costs of the audit as part of its public works assistance account program loan or grant.

(11) The board must implement policies and procedures designed to maximize local government consideration of other funds to finance local infrastructure. [2021 c 65 s 49; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 9; 2015 3rd sp.s. c 3 s 7033; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 19 s 7032; 2013 c 275 s 3; 2012 c 196 s 9; 2009 c 518 s 16; 2008 c 299 s 25. Prior: 2007 c 341 s 24; 2007 c 231 s 2; 2001 c 131 s 5; 1999 c 164 s 602; 1997 c 429 s 29; 1996 c 168 s 3; 1995 c 363 s 3; 1993 c 39 s 1; 1991 sp.s. c 32 s 23; 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 s 82; 1990 c 133 s 6; 1988 c 93 s 3; 1987 c 505 s 40; 1985 c 446 s 12.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.

Effective date—2015 3rd sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 43.160.080.

Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 19: See note following RCW 43.34.080.

Short title—2008 c 299: See note following RCW 76.15.020.

Effective date—2007 c 341: See RCW 90.71.907.

Findings—Recommendations—Reports encouraged—2007 c 231: "(1) The legislature finds that permit programs have been legislatively established to protect the health, welfare, economy, and environment of Washington's citizens and to provide a fair, competitive opportunity for business innovation and consumer confidence. The legislature also finds that uncertainty in government processes to permit an activity by a citizen of Washington state is undesirable and erodes confidence in government. The legislature further finds that in

the case of projects that would further economic development in the state, information about the permitting process is critical for an applicant's planning and financial assessment of the proposed project. The legislature also finds that applicants have a responsibility to provide complete and accurate information.

(2) The legislature recommends that applicants be provided with the following information when applying for a development permit from a city, county, or state agency:

(a) The minimum and maximum time an agency will need to make a decision on a permit, including public comment requirements;

(b) The minimum amount of information required for an agency to make a decision on a permit;

(c) When an agency considers an application complete for processing;

(d) The minimum and maximum costs in agency fees that will be incurred by the permit applicant; and

(e) The reasons for a denial of a permit in writing.

(3) In providing this information to applicants, an agency should base estimates on the best information available about the permitting program and prior applications for similar permits, as well as on the information provided by the applicant. New information provided by the applicant subsequent to the agency estimates may change the information provided by an agency per subsection (2) of this section. Project modifications by an applicant may result in more time, more information, or higher fees being required for permit processing.

(4) This section does not create an independent cause of action, affect any existing cause of action, or establish time limits for purposes of RCW 64.40.020.

(5) City, county, and state agencies issuing development permits are encouraged to track the progress in providing the information to applicants per subsection (2) of this section by preparing an annual report of its performance for the preceding fiscal year. The report should be posted on its website [and] made available and provided to the appropriate standing committees of the senate and house of representatives." [2007 c 231 s 1.]

Findings—Intent—Part headings and subheadings not law—Effective date—Severability—1999 c 164: See notes following RCW 43.160.010.

Savings—1999 c 164 ss 301-303, 305, 306, and 601-603: See note following RCW 82.60.020.

Effective date—1997 c 429 ss 29, 30: "Sections 29 and 30 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect immediately [May 19, 1997]." [1997 c 429 s 55.]

Severability—1997 c 429: See note following RCW 36.70A.3201.

Finding—Purpose—1995 c 363: See note following RCW 43.155.068.

Effective date—1993 c 39: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect July 1, 1993." [1993 c 39 s 2.]

Section headings not law—1991 sp.s. c 32: See RCW 36.70A.902.

Intent—1990 1st ex.s. c 17: See note following RCW 43.210.010.

Severability—Part, section headings not law—1990 1st ex.s. c 17:
See RCW 36.70A.900 and 36.70A.901.

Findings—Severability—1990 c 133: See notes following RCW 36.94.140.

RCW 43.155.075 Loans and grants for public works projects—Statement of environmental benefits—Sustainable asset management best practices—Development of outcome-focused performance measures. In providing loans and grants for public works projects, the board shall require recipients to incorporate the environmental benefits of the project into their applications, and the board shall utilize the statement of environmental benefits in its prioritization and selection process, when applicable. For projects funded under this chapter, the board may require a local government to have sustainable asset management best practices in place; provide a long-term financial plan to demonstrate a sound maintenance program; have a long-term financial plan for loan repayments in place; and undergo value planning at the predesign project stage, where the greatest productivity gains and cost savings can be found. The board shall also develop appropriate outcome-focused performance measures to be used both for management and performance assessment of the loan and grant program. To the extent possible, the department should coordinate its performance measure system with other natural resource-related agencies as defined in RCW 43.41.270. The board shall consult with affected interest groups in implementing this section. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 10; 2001 c 227 s 10.]

Findings—Intent—2001 c 227: See note following RCW 43.41.270.

RCW 43.155.080 Records and audits. The board shall keep proper records of accounts and shall be subject to audit by the state auditor. [1987 c 505 s 41; 1985 c 446 s 13.]

RCW 43.155.090 Loan agreements. Loans from the public works assistance account under this chapter shall be made by loan agreement under chapter 39.69 RCW. [1987 c 19 s 6.]

RCW 43.155.110 Puget Sound partners. In developing a priority process for public works projects under RCW 43.155.070, the board shall give preferences only to Puget Sound partners, as defined in RCW 90.71.010, over other entities that are eligible to be included in the definition of Puget Sound partner. Entities that are not eligible to be a Puget Sound partner due to geographic location, composition, exclusion from the scope of the action agenda developed by the Puget Sound partnership under RCW 90.71.310, or for any other reason, shall not be given less preferential treatment than Puget Sound partners. [2007 c 341 s 25.]

Effective date—2007 c 341: See RCW 90.71.907.

RCW 43.155.120 Administering funds—Preference to an evergreen community. When administering funds under this chapter, the board shall give preference only to an evergreen community recognized under RCW 76.15.090 in comparison to other entities that are eligible to receive evergreen community designation. Entities not eligible for designation as an evergreen community shall not be given less preferential treatment than an evergreen community. [2021 c 209 s 17; 2008 c 299 s 30.]

Findings—Intent—2021 c 209: See note following RCW 76.15.005.

Short title—2008 c 299: See note following RCW 76.15.020.

RCW 43.155.130 Intent—Local infrastructure assistance—Plan.

(1) The legislature intends to modernize state programs that provide financial and technical assistance related to local infrastructure by: (a) Clarifying the policy objectives and priorities for state assistance for local infrastructure; (b) eliminating redundancy among the various state programs; (c) increasing the speed of delivering state assistance and the ability to respond to emerging needs; (d) maximizing the acquisition and use of federal funding sources; (e) ensuring transparency in state and federal assistance; (f) improving access to the lowest cost private market financing; and (g) ensuring accountability and the periodic review of progress.

(2) By November 1, 2011, the public works board must prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of the legislature an implementation plan for creating a reformed state system for providing local infrastructure assistance. In developing the plan, the board must consult with state agencies that provide infrastructure funding and technical assistance including, but not limited to, the departments of commerce, health, and ecology. The board must also work in cooperation with local governments or entities that benefit from infrastructure funding and technical assistance.

(3) The board, state agencies, and local partners must consider, among other things, consolidation of state appropriations to support policy-focused investments including water quality, safe drinking water, stormwater, economic development, access to private financing, solid waste and recycling, and flood levees. In addition, they must consider consolidating assistance packages, streamlining application processes, and clarify the respective responsibilities of state and local agencies in planning for, developing[,] and maintaining local public infrastructure.

(4) The implementation plan must include draft legislation and the organizational and budgetary changes necessary to implement the new system in time for the 2013-2015 budget cycle. [2011 1st sp.s. c 48 s 7028.]

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 48: See note following RCW 39.35B.050.

RCW 43.155.140 Projects in areas impacted by the closure or potential closure of large coal-fired electric generation facilities. The board shall solicit qualifying projects to plan, design, and construct public works projects needed to attract new industrial and commercial activities in areas impacted by the closure or potential closure of large coal-fired electric generation facilities, which for the purposes of this section means a facility that emitted more than one million tons of greenhouse gases in any calendar year prior to 2008. The projects should be consistent with any applicable plans for major industrial activity on lands formerly used or designated for surface coal mining and supporting uses under RCW 36.70A.368. When the board receives timely and eligible project applications from a political subdivision of the state for financial assistance for such projects, the board from available funds shall give priority consideration to such projects. [2011 c 180 s 302.]

Findings—Purpose—2011 c 180: See note following RCW 80.80.010.

RCW 43.155.150 Interagency, multijurisdictional system improvement team. (Expires June 30, 2025.) (1) An interagency, multijurisdictional system improvement team must identify, implement, and report on system improvements that achieve the designated outcomes, including:

- (a) Projects that maximize value, minimize overall costs and disturbance to the community, and ensure long-term durability and resilience;
- (b) Projects that are designed to meet the unique needs of each community, rather than the needs of particular funding programs;
- (c) Project designs that maximize long-term value by fully considering and responding to anticipated long-term environmental, technological, economic and population changes;
- (d) The flexibility to innovate, including utilizing natural systems, addressing multiple regulatory drivers, and forming regional partnerships;
- (e) The ability to plan and collaborate across programs and jurisdictions so that different investments are packaged to be complementary, timely, and responsive to economic and community opportunities;
- (f) The needed capacity for communities, appropriate to their unique financial, planning, and management capacities, so they can design, finance, and build projects that best meet their long-term needs and minimize costs;
- (g) Optimal use and leveraging of federal and private infrastructure dollars; and
- (h) Mechanisms to ensure periodic, systemwide review and ongoing achievement of the designated outcomes.

(2) The system improvement team must consist of representatives of state infrastructure programs that provide funding for drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and broadband programs, including but not limited to representatives from the public works board, department of ecology, department of health, and the department of commerce. The system improvement team may invite representatives of other infrastructure programs, such as transportation, energy, and broadband, as needed in order to achieve efficiency, minimize costs, and maximize value across infrastructure programs. The system

improvement team shall also consist of representatives of users of those programs, representatives of infrastructure project builders, and other parties the system improvement team determines would contribute to achieving the desired outcomes, including but not limited to representatives from a state association of cities, a state association of counties, a state association of public utility districts, a state association of water and sewer districts, a state association of general contractors, and a state organization representing building trades. The public works board, a representative from the department of ecology, department of health, and department of commerce shall facilitate the work of the system improvement team.

(3) The system improvement team must focus on achieving the designated outcomes within existing program structures and authorities. The system improvement team shall use lean practices to achieve the designated outcomes.

(4) The system improvement team shall provide briefings as requested to the public works board on the current state of infrastructure programs to build an understanding of the infrastructure investment program landscape and the interplay of its component parts.

(5) If the system improvement team encounters statutory or regulatory barriers to system improvements, the system improvement team must inform the public works board and consult on possible solutions. When achieving the designated outcomes would be best served through changes in program structures or authorities, the system improvement team must report those findings to the public works board.

(6) By September 1, 2022, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the system improvement team must submit a report to the appropriate committees of the legislature that includes the following:

(a) A list of all projects funded by members of the system improvement team;

(b) A description of the coordination the system improvement team has completed with other grant programs and funds leveraged; and

(c) A description of regional planning that has occurred.

(7) This section expires June 30, 2025. [2021 c 332 s 7033; 2021 c 190 s 1. Prior: 2017 3rd sp.s. c 10 s 11.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2021 c 190 s 1 and by 2021 c 332 s 7033, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Effective date—2021 c 332: See note following RCW 43.19.501.

RCW 43.155.160 Broadband service expansion grant and loan program—Emergency public works broadband projects. (1) The board, in collaboration with the office, shall establish a competitive grant and loan program to award funding to eligible applicants in order to promote the expansion of access to broadband service in unserved areas of the state.

(2) (a) Grants and loans may be awarded under this section to assist in funding acquisition, installation, and construction of middle mile and last mile infrastructure that supports broadband services and to assist in funding strategic planning for deploying broadband service in unserved areas.

(b) The board may choose to fund all or part of an application for funding, provided that the application meets the requirements of subsection (11) of this section.

(3) Eligible applicants for grants and loans awarded under this section include:

- (a) Local governments;
- (b) Tribes;
- (c) Nonprofit organizations;
- (d) Cooperative associations;
- (e) Multiparty entities comprised of public entity members;
- (f) Limited liability corporations organized for the purpose of expanding broadband access; and
- (g) Incorporated businesses or partnerships.

(4) (a) The board shall develop administrative procedures governing the preapplication and award process. The board shall act as fiscal agent for the program and is responsible for receiving and reviewing applications and awarding funds under this section.

(b) At least sixty days prior to the first day preapplications may be submitted each fiscal year, the board must publish on its website the specific criteria and any quantitative weighting scheme or scoring system that the board will use to evaluate or rank applications and award funding.

(c) The board may maintain separate accounting in the statewide broadband account created in RCW 43.155.165 as the board deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

(d) The board must provide a method for the allocation of loans, grants, provision of technical assistance, and interest rates under this section.

(5) An applicant for a grant or loan under this section must provide the following information on the preapplication:

- (a) The location and description of the project;
- (b) Evidence regarding the unserved nature of the community in which the project is to be located;
- (c) Evidence that proposed infrastructure will be capable of scaling to greater download and upload speeds;
- (d) The number of households passed that will gain access to broadband service as a result of the project or whose broadband service will be upgraded as a result of the project;
- (e) Evidence that before submission of the application, the applicant contacted, in writing, all entities providing broadband service near the proposed project area to ask each broadband service provider's plan to upgrade broadband service in the project area to speeds that meet or exceed the state's definition for broadband service as defined in RCW 43.330.530, within the time frame specified in the proposed grant or loan activities;
- (f) If applicable, the broadband service providers' written responses to the inquiry made under (e) of this subsection;
- (g) The proposed geographic broadband service area and the proposed broadband speeds in the form and manner prescribed by the board;
- (h) Evidence of community support for the project; and
- (i) Any additional information requested by the board.

(6) An applicant for a grant or loan under this section must provide the following information on the application:

- (a) The final location and description of the project;
- (b) Evidence that the proposed infrastructure will be capable of scaling to greater download and upload speeds;

(c) The number of households passed that will gain access to broadband service as a result of the project or whose broadband service will be upgraded as a result of the project;

(d) The estimated cost of retail services to end users facilitated by a project;

(e) The proposed actual download and upload speeds experienced by end users;

(f) Evidence of significant community institutions that will benefit from the proposed project;

(g) Anticipated economic, educational, health care, or public safety benefits created by the project;

(h) If available, a description of the applicant's user adoption assistance program and efforts to promote the use of newly available broadband services created by the project;

(i) The estimated total cost of the project;

(j) Other sources of funding for the project that will supplement any grant or loan award;

(k) A demonstration of the project's long-term sustainability, including the applicant's financial soundness, organizational capacity, and technical expertise;

(l) A strategic plan to maintain long-term operation of the infrastructure;

(m) If applicable, documentation describing the outcome of the broadband service providers' written responses to the inquiry made prior to or during the preapplication phase; and

(n) Any additional information requested by the board.

(7) (a) The board shall publish on its website for at least 30 days the proposed geographic broadband service area and the proposed broadband speeds for each proposed broadband project submitted in the preapplication period.

(b) The board shall, within three business days following the close of the preapplication cycle, publish on its website preapplications as described in subsection (5) of this section.

(c) The board shall set an objection period of at least 30 days.

(8) (a) Any existing broadband service provider near the proposed project area may submit in writing to the board an objection to a proposed broadband project. An objection must contain information demonstrating that:

(i) The project would result in overbuild, meaning that the objecting provider currently provides, or has begun construction to provide, broadband service to end users in the proposed project area at speeds equal to or greater than the speeds contained in the definition of broadband in *RCW 43.330.530(2); or

(ii) The objecting provider commits to complete construction of broadband infrastructure and provide broadband service to end users in the proposed project area at speeds equal to or greater than the speeds contained in the definition of broadband in *RCW 43.330.530(2), no later than twenty-four months after the date awards are made under this section for the grant and loan cycle under which the preapplication was submitted.

(b) Objections submitted to the board under this subsection must be certified by affidavit.

(c) The board may evaluate the information submitted under this section by the objecting provider and must consider it in making a determination on the proposed broadband project objected to. The board may request clarification or additional information. The board may choose to not fund a project if the board determines that the

objecting provider's commitment to provide broadband service that meets the requirements of (a) of this subsection in the proposed project area is credible. In assessing the commitment, the board may consider whether the objecting provider has or will provide a bond, letter of credit, or other indicia of financial commitment guaranteeing the project's completion.

(d) If the board denies funding to an applicant as a result of a broadband service provider's objection made under this section, and the broadband service provider does not fulfill its commitment to provide broadband service in the project area, then for the following two grant and loan cycles, the board is prohibited from denying funding to an applicant on the basis of a challenge by the same broadband service provider, unless the board determines that the broadband service provider's failure to fulfill the provider's commitment was the result of factors beyond the broadband service provider's control. The board is not prohibited from denying funding to an applicant for reasons other than an objection by the same broadband service provider.

(e) An applicant or broadband service provider that objected to the application may request a debriefing conference regarding the board's decision on the application. Requests for debriefing must be coordinated by the office and must be submitted in writing in accordance with procedures specified by the office.

(f) Confidential business and financial information submitted by an objecting provider under this subsection is exempt from disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW.

(9) (a) In evaluating applications and awarding funds, the board shall give priority to applications that are constructed in areas identified as unserved.

(b) In evaluating applications and awarding funds, the board may give priority to applications that:

(i) Provide assistance to public-private partnerships deploying broadband infrastructure from areas currently served with broadband service to areas currently lacking access to broadband services;

(ii) Demonstrate project readiness to proceed;

(iii) Construct infrastructure that is open access, meaning that during the useful life of the infrastructure, service providers may use network services and facilities at rates, terms, and conditions that are not discriminatory or preferential between providers, and employing accountable interconnection arrangements published and available publicly;

(iv) Are submitted by tribal governments whose reservations are in rural and remote areas where reliable and efficient broadband services are unavailable to many or most residents;

(v) Bring broadband service to tribal lands, particularly to rural and remote tribal lands or areas servicing rural and remote tribal entities;

(vi) Are submitted by tribal governments in rural and remote areas that have spent significant amounts of tribal funds to address the problem but cannot provide necessary broadband services without either additional state support, additional federal support, or both;

(vii) Serve economically distressed areas of the state as the term "distressed area" is defined in RCW 43.168.020;

(viii) Offer new or substantially upgraded broadband service to important community anchor institutions including, but not limited to, libraries, educational institutions, public safety facilities, and health care facilities;

(ix) Facilitate the use of telemedicine and electronic health records, especially in deliverance of behavioral health services and services to veterans;

(x) Provide technical support and train residents, businesses, and institutions in the community served by the project to utilize broadband service;

(xi) Include a component to actively promote the adoption of newly available broadband services in the community;

(xii) Provide evidence of strong support for the project from citizens, government, businesses, and community institutions;

(xiii) Provide access to broadband service to a greater number of unserved households and businesses, including farms;

(xiv) Utilize equipment and technology demonstrating greater longevity of service;

(xv) Seek the lowest amount of state investment per new location served and leverage greater amounts of funding for the project from other private and public sources;

(xvi) Include evidence of a customer service plan;

(xvii) Consider leveraging existing broadband infrastructure and other unique solutions;

(xviii) Benefit public safety and fire preparedness; or

(xix) Demonstrate other priorities as the board, in collaboration with the office, may prescribe by rule.

(c) The board shall endeavor to award funds under this section to qualified applicants in all regions of the state.

(d) The board shall consider affordability and quality of service to end users in making a determination on any application.

(e) The board, in collaboration with the office, may develop additional rules for eligibility, project preapplications, project applications, the associated objection process, and funding priority, as provided under this subsection and subsections (3), (5), (6), (7), and (8) of this section.

(f) The board, in collaboration with the office, may adopt rules for a voluntary nonbinding mediation between incumbent providers and applicants to the grant and loan program created in this section.

(10) To ensure a grant or loan to a private entity under this section primarily serves the public interest and benefits the public, any such grant or loan must be conditioned on a guarantee that the asset or infrastructure to be developed will be maintained for public use for a period of at least fifteen years.

(11)(a) No funds awarded under this section may fund more than fifty percent of the total cost of the project, except as provided in (b) of this subsection.

(b) The board may choose to fund up to ninety percent of the total cost of a project in financially distressed areas as the term "distressed area" is defined in RCW 43.168.020, and in areas identified as Indian country as the term "Indian country" is defined in WAC 458-20-192.

(c) Funds awarded to a single project under this section must not exceed two million dollars, except that the board may choose to fund projects qualifying for the exception in (b) of this subsection up to, but not to exceed, five million dollars.

(12) The board shall have such rights of recovery in the event of default in payment or other breach of financing agreement as may be provided in the agreement or otherwise by law.

(13) The community economic revitalization board shall facilitate the timely transmission of information and documents from its

broadband program to the board in order to effectuate an orderly transition.

(14)(a) Subject to rules promulgated by the board, the board may make low-interest or interest-free loans or grants to eligible applicants for emergency public works broadband projects. While developing rules, the board shall consider prioritizing broadband infrastructure projects that replace existing infrastructure impacted by an emergency, as described in (b) of this subsection.

(b) Emergency public works broadband projects include construction, repair, reconstruction, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement to critical broadband infrastructure that has been made necessary by a natural disaster or damaged by unforeseen events. To ensure limited resources are provided as efficiently as possible, the board shall grant priority to emergency public works projects that replace existing infrastructure of the provider whose facilities were damaged by the unforeseen event and shall not provide funds to a new provider to overbuild the existing provider. The loans or grants may be used to help fund all or part of an emergency public works broadband infrastructure project less any reimbursement from any of the following sources: (i) Federal disaster or emergency funds, including funds from the federal emergency management agency; (ii) state disaster or emergency funds; (iii) insurance settlements; and (iv) litigation.

(c) Eligible applicants for grants and loans awarded under this subsection are the same as those described in subsection (3) of this section.

(15) The definitions in RCW 43.330.530 apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(16) For purposes of this section, a "proposed broadband project" means a project that has been submitted as a preapplication to the public works board. [2022 c 201 s 1; 2021 c 332 s 7040; 2019 c 365 s 7.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 43.330.530 was alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k), changing subsection (2) to subsection (4), effective July 1, 2023.

Effective date—2021 c 332: See note following RCW 43.19.501.

Findings—2019 c 365: See note following RCW 43.330.532.

RCW 43.155.165 Statewide broadband account. (1) The statewide broadband account is created in the state treasury. Moneys received from appropriations by the legislature, the proceeds of bond sales when authorized by the legislature, repayment of loans, or any other lawful source must be deposited into the account for uses consistent with this section. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation.

(2) Expenditures from the account may be used only:

(a) For grant and loan awards made under RCW 43.155.160, including costs incurred by the board to administer RCW 43.155.160;

(b) To contract for data acquisition, a statewide broadband demand assessment, or gap analysis;

(c) To supplement revenues raised by bonds sold by local governments for broadband infrastructure development; or

(d) To provide for state match requirements under federal law.

(3) The board must maintain separate accounting for any federal funds in the account.

(4) The definitions in RCW 43.330.530 apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise. [2019 c 365 s 8.]

Findings—2019 c 365: See note following RCW 43.330.532.