

Chapter 90.71 RCW
PUGET SOUND WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

Sections

- 90.71.010 Definitions.
- 90.71.060 Puget Sound assessment and monitoring program.
- 90.71.110 Puget Sound scientific research account.
- 90.71.200 Findings—Intent.
- 90.71.210 Puget Sound partnership—Created.
- 90.71.220 Leadership council—Membership.
- 90.71.230 Leadership council—Powers and duties.
- 90.71.240 Executive director—Appointment—Authority.
- 90.71.250 Ecosystem coordination board—Membership—Duties.
- 90.71.260 Development of the action agenda—Integration of watershed programs and ecosystem-level plans.
- 90.71.270 Science panel—Creation—Membership.
- 90.71.280 Science panel—Duties.
- 90.71.290 Science panel—Strategic science program—Puget Sound science update—Quadrennial science work plan.
- 90.71.300 Action agenda—Goals and objectives.
- 90.71.310 Action agenda—Development—Elements revision and updates.
- 90.71.320 Action agenda—Biennial budget requests.
- 90.71.330 Funding from partnership—Accountability.
- 90.71.340 Fiscal accountability—Fiscal incentives and disincentives for implementation of the action agenda.
- 90.71.350 Accountability for achieving and implementing action agenda—Noncompliance.
- 90.71.360 Limitations on authority.
- 90.71.370 Report to the governor and legislature—State of the Sound report—Review of programs.
- 90.71.380 Assessment of basin-wide restoration progress.
- 90.71.390 Performance audits of the partnership.
- 90.71.400 Puget Sound recovery account.
- 90.71.410 Lake Whatcom phosphorus loading demonstration program.
- 90.71.420 Report to the legislature.
- 90.71.430 Environmental justice obligations of the Puget Sound partnership.
- 90.71.904 Transfer of powers, duties, and functions—References to chair of the Puget Sound action team.
- 90.71.907 Effective date—2007 c 341.

RCW 90.71.010 Definitions. Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Action agenda" means the comprehensive schedule of projects, programs, and other activities designed to achieve a healthy Puget Sound ecosystem that is authorized and further described in RCW 90.71.300 and 90.71.310.

(2) "Action area" means the geographic areas delineated as provided in RCW 90.71.260.

(3) "Benchmarks" means measurable interim milestones or achievements established to demonstrate progress towards a goal, objective, or outcome.

(4) "Board" means the ecosystem coordination board.

(5) "Council" means the leadership council.

(6) "Environmental indicator" means a physical, biological, or chemical measurement, statistic, or value that provides a proximate gauge, or evidence of, the state or condition of Puget Sound.

(7) "Implementation strategies" means the strategies incorporated on a quadrennial basis in the action agenda developed under RCW 90.71.310.

(8) "Nearshore" means the area beginning at the crest of coastal bluffs and extending seaward through the marine photics zone, and to the head of tide in coastal rivers and streams. "Nearshore" also means both shoreline and estuaries.

(9) "Panel" means the Puget Sound science panel.

(10) "Partnership" means the Puget Sound partnership.

(11) "Puget Sound" means Puget Sound and related inland marine waters, including all salt waters of the state of Washington inside the international boundary line between Washington and British Columbia, and lying east of the junction of the Pacific Ocean and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the rivers and streams draining to Puget Sound as mapped by water resource inventory areas 1 through 19 in WAC 173-500-040 as it exists on July 1, 2007.

(12) "Puget Sound partner" means an entity that has been recognized by the partnership, as provided in RCW 90.71.340, as having consistently achieved outstanding progress in implementing the 2020 action agenda.

(13) "Watershed groups" means all groups sponsoring or administering watershed programs, including but not limited to local governments, private sector entities, watershed planning units, watershed councils, shellfish protection areas, regional fishery enhancement groups, marine resources committees including those working with the Northwest straits commission, nearshore groups, and watershed lead entities.

(14) "Watershed programs" means and includes all watershed-level plans, programs, projects, and activities that relate to or may contribute to the protection or restoration of Puget Sound waters. Such programs include jurisdiction-wide programs regardless of whether more than one watershed is addressed. [2017 c 54 s 1; 2007 c 341 s 2; 1996 c 138 s 2.]

RCW 90.71.060 Puget Sound assessment and monitoring program. In addition to other powers and duties specified in this chapter, the panel, with the approval of the council, shall guide the implementation and coordination of a Puget Sound assessment and monitoring program. [2007 c 341 s 22; 1996 c 138 s 7.]

RCW 90.71.110 Puget Sound scientific research account. The Puget Sound scientific research account is created in the state treasury. All gifts, grants, federal moneys, or appropriations made to the account must be deposited into the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used only for research programs and projects selected pursuant to the process developed and overseen by the Puget Sound science panel as provided in RCW 90.71.280(1)(c). [2009 c 99 s 1; 2007 c 345 s 3.]

Findings—2007 c 345: "Although research about conditions in Puget Sound have been studied during the past several decades, the legislature finds that there is no coordinated, focused, comprehensive Puget Sound science program capable of setting research priorities for Puget Sound science. The legislature finds that environmental problems in Puget Sound are complex and that research is needed to provide information that can guide protective and restorative actions, and to explore and understand the impacts of a changing environment. The legislature also finds that there is no predictable funding process for Puget Sound research projects, including the aquatic rehabilitation zone one. The legislature declares that the state needs a process to focus the scientific effort on the Puget Sound ecosystem and to distribute research funds." [2007 c 345 s 1.]

RCW 90.71.200 Findings—Intent. (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Puget Sound, including Hood Canal, and the waters that flow to it are a national treasure and a unique resource. Residents enjoy a way of life centered around these waters that depends upon clean and healthy marine and freshwater resources.

(b) Puget Sound is in serious decline, and Hood Canal is in a serious crisis. This decline is indicated by loss of and damage to critical habit, rapid decline in species populations, increases in aquatic nuisance species, numerous toxics contaminated sites, urbanization and attendant stormwater drainage, closure of beaches to shellfish harvest due to disease risks, low-dissolved oxygen levels causing death of marine life, and other phenomena. If left unchecked, these conditions will worsen.

(c) Puget Sound must be restored and protected in a more coherent and effective manner. The current system is highly fragmented. Immediate and concerted action is necessary by all levels of government working with the public, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to ensure a thriving natural system that exists in harmony with a vibrant economy.

(d) Leadership, accountability, government transparency, thoughtful and responsible spending of public funds, and public involvement will be integral to the success of efforts to restore and protect Puget Sound.

(2) The legislature therefore creates a new Puget Sound partnership to coordinate and lead the effort to restore and protect Puget Sound, and intends that all governmental entities, including federal and state agencies, tribes, cities, counties, ports, and special purpose districts, support and help implement the partnership's restoration efforts. The legislature further intends that the partnership will:

(a) Define a strategic action agenda prioritizing necessary actions, both basin-wide and within specific areas, and creating an approach that addresses all of the complex connections among the land, water, web of species, and human needs. The action agenda will be based on science and include clear, measurable goals for the recovery of Puget Sound by 2020;

(b) Determine accountability for performance, oversee the efficiency and effectiveness of money spent, educate and engage the public, and track and report results to the legislature, the governor, and the public;

(c) Not have regulatory authority, nor authority to transfer the responsibility for, or implementation of, any state regulatory program, unless otherwise specifically authorized by the legislature.

(3) It is the goal of the state that the health of Puget Sound be restored by 2020. [2007 c 341 s 1.]

RCW 90.71.210 Puget Sound partnership—Created. An agency of state government, to be known as the Puget Sound partnership, is created to oversee the restoration of the environmental health of Puget Sound by 2020. The agency shall consist of a leadership council, an executive director, an ecosystem coordination board, and a Puget Sound science panel. [2007 c 341 s 3.]

RCW 90.71.220 Leadership council—Membership. (1) The partnership shall be led by a leadership council composed of seven members appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate. The governor shall appoint members who are publicly respected and influential, are interested in the environmental and economic prosperity of Puget Sound, and have demonstrated leadership qualities. The governor shall designate one of the seven members to serve as chair and a vice chair shall be selected annually by the membership of the council.

(2) The initial members shall be appointed as follows:

(a) Three of the initial members shall be appointed for a term of two years;

(b) Two of the initial members shall be appointed for a term of three years; and

(c) Two of the initial members shall be appointed for a term of four years.

(3) The initial members' successors shall be appointed for terms of four years each, except that any person chosen to fill a vacancy shall be appointed only for the unexpired term of the member whom he or she succeeds.

(4) Members of the council are eligible for reappointment.

(5) Any member of the council may be removed by the governor for cause.

(6) Members whose terms expire shall continue to serve until reappointed or replaced by a new member.

(7) A majority of the council constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

(8) Council decisions and actions require majority vote approval of all councilmembers. [2007 c 341 s 4.]

RCW 90.71.230 Leadership council—Powers and duties. (1) The leadership council shall have the power and duty to:

(a) Provide leadership and have responsibility for the functions of the partnership, including adopting, revising, and guiding the implementation of the action agenda, allocating funds for Puget Sound recovery, providing progress and other reports, setting strategic priorities and benchmarks, adopting and applying accountability measures, and making appointments to the board and panel;

(b) Adopt rules, in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW;

(c) Create subcommittees and advisory committees as appropriate to assist the council;

(d) Enter into, amend, and terminate contracts with individuals, corporations, or research institutions to effectuate the purposes of this chapter;

(e) Make grants to governmental and nongovernmental entities to effectuate the purposes of this chapter;

(f) Receive such gifts, grants, and endowments, in trust or otherwise, for the use and benefit of the partnership to effectuate the purposes of this chapter;

(g) Promote extensive public awareness, education, and participation in Puget Sound protection and recovery;

(h) Work collaboratively with the Hood Canal coordinating council established in chapter 90.88 RCW on Hood Canal-specific issues;

(i) Maintain complete and consolidated financial information to ensure that all funds received and expended to implement the action agenda have been accounted for; and

(j) Such other powers and duties as are necessary and appropriate to carry out the provisions of this chapter.

(2) The council may delegate functions to the chair and to the executive director, however the council may not delegate its decisional authority regarding developing or amending the action agenda.

(3) The council shall work closely with existing organizations and all levels of government to ensure that the action agenda and its implementation are scientifically sound, efficient, and achieve necessary results to accomplish recovery of Puget Sound to health by 2020.

(4) The council shall support, engage, and foster collaboration among watershed groups to assist in the recovery of Puget Sound.

(5) When working with federally recognized Indian tribes to develop and implement the action agenda, the council shall conform to the procedures and standards required in a government-to-governmental relationship with tribes under the 1989 Centennial Accord between the state of Washington and the sovereign tribal governments in the state of Washington.

(6) Members of the council shall be compensated in accordance with RCW 43.03.220 and be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. [2007 c 341 s 5.]

RCW 90.71.240 Executive director—Appointment—Authority. (1)

The partnership shall be administered by an executive director who serves as a communication link between all levels of government, the private sector, tribes, nongovernmental organizations, the council, the board, and the panel. The executive director shall be accountable to the council and the governor for effective communication, actions, and results.

(2) The executive director shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor, in consultation with the council. The governor shall consider the recommendations of the council when appointing the executive director.

(3) The executive director shall have complete charge of and supervisory powers over the partnership, subject to the guidance from the council.

(4) The executive director shall employ a staff, who shall be state employees under Title 41 RCW.

(5) Upon approval of the council, the executive director may take action to create a private nonprofit entity, which may take the form of a nonprofit corporation, to assist the partnership in restoring Puget Sound by:

(a) Raising money and other resources through charitable giving, donations, and other appropriate mechanisms;

(b) Engaging and educating the public regarding Puget Sound's health, including efforts and opportunities to restore Puget Sound ecosystems; and

(c) Performing other similar activities as directed by the partnership. [2007 c 341 s 6.]

RCW 90.71.250 Ecosystem coordination board—Membership—Duties.

(1) The council shall convene the ecosystem coordination board not later than October 1, 2007.

(2) The board shall consist of the following:

(a) One representative from the geographic area of each of the action areas specified in RCW 90.71.260, appointed by the council. The council shall solicit nominations from, at a minimum, counties, cities, and watershed groups;

(b) Two members representing general business interests, one of whom shall represent in-state general small business interests, both appointed by the council;

(c) Two members representing environmental interests, appointed by the council;

(d) Three representatives of tribal governments located in Puget Sound, invited by the governor to participate as members of the board;

(e) One representative each from counties, cities, and port districts, appointed by the council from nominations submitted by statewide associations representing such local governments;

(f) Three representatives of state agencies with environmental management responsibilities in Puget Sound, representing the interests of all state agencies, one of whom shall be the commissioner of public lands or his or her designee; and

(g) Three representatives of federal agencies with environmental management responsibilities in Puget Sound, representing the interests of all federal agencies and invited by the governor to participate as members of the board.

(3) The president of the senate shall appoint two senators, one from each major caucus, as legislative liaisons to the board. The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint two representatives, one from each major caucus, as legislative liaisons to the board.

(4) The board shall elect one of its members as chair, and one of its members as vice chair.

(5) The board shall advise and assist the council in carrying out its responsibilities in implementing this chapter, including development and implementation of the action agenda. The board's duties include:

(a) Assisting cities, counties, ports, tribes, watershed groups, and other governmental and private organizations in the compilation of local programs for consideration for inclusion in the action agenda as provided in RCW 90.71.260;

(b) Upon request of the council, reviewing and making recommendations regarding activities, projects, and programs proposed for inclusion in the action agenda, including assessing existing ecosystem scale management, restoration and protection plan elements, activities, projects, and programs for inclusion in the action agenda;

(c) Seeking public and private funding and the commitment of other resources for plan implementation;

(d) Assisting the council in conducting public education activities regarding threats to Puget Sound and about local implementation strategies to support the action agenda; and

(e) Recruiting the active involvement of and encouraging the collaboration and communication among governmental and nongovernmental entities, the private sector, and citizens working to achieve the recovery of Puget Sound.

(6) Members of the board, except for federal and state employees, shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. [2007 c 341 s 7.]

RCW 90.71.260 Development of the action agenda—Integration of watershed programs and ecosystem-level plans. (1) The partnership shall develop the action agenda in part upon the foundation of existing watershed programs that address or contribute to the health of Puget Sound. To ensure full consideration of these watershed programs in a timely manner to meet the required date for adoption of the action agenda, the partnership shall rely largely upon local watershed groups, tribes, cities, counties, special purpose districts, and the private sector, who are engaged in developing and implementing these programs.

(2) The partnership shall organize this work by working with these groups in the following geographic action areas of Puget Sound, which collectively encompass all of the Puget Sound basin and include the areas draining to the marine waters in these action areas:

- (a) Strait of Juan de Fuca;
- (b) The San Juan Islands;
- (c) Whidbey Island;
- (d) North central Puget Sound;
- (e) South central Puget Sound;
- (f) South Puget Sound; and
- (g) Hood Canal.

(3) The council shall define the geographic delineations of these action areas based upon the common issues and interests of the entities in these action areas, and upon the characteristics of the Sound's physical structure, and the water flows into and within the Sound.

(4) The executive director, working with the board representatives from each action area, shall invite appropriate tribes, local governments, and watershed groups to convene for the purpose of compiling the existing watershed programs relating or contributing to the health of Puget Sound. The participating groups should work to identify the applicable local plan elements, projects, and programs, together with estimated budget, timelines, and proposed funding sources, that are suitable for adoption into the action agenda. This may include a prioritization among plan elements, projects, and programs.

(5) The partnership may provide assistance to watershed groups in those action areas that are developing and implementing programs included within the action agenda, and to improve coordination among the groups to improve and accelerate the implementation of the action agenda.

(6) The executive director, working with the board, shall also compile and assess ecosystem scale management, restoration, and protection plans for the Puget Sound basin.

(a) At a minimum, the compilation shall include the Puget Sound nearshore estuary project, clean-up plans for contaminated aquatic lands and shorelands, aquatic land management plans, state resource management plans, habitat conservation plans, and recovery plans for salmon, orca, and other species in Puget Sound that are listed under the federal endangered species act.

(b) The board should work to identify and assess applicable ecosystem scale plan elements, projects, and programs, together with estimated budget, timelines, and proposed funding sources, that are suitable for adoption into the action agenda.

(c) When the board identifies conflicts or disputes among ecosystem scale projects or programs, the board may convene the agency managers in an attempt to reconcile the conflicts with the objective of advancing the protection and recovery of Puget Sound.

(d) If it determines that doing so will increase the likelihood of restoring Puget Sound by 2020, the partnership may explore the utility of federal assurances under the endangered species act, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et seq., and shall confer with the federal services administering that act.

(7) The executive director shall integrate and present the proposed elements from watershed programs and ecosystem-level plans to the council for consideration for inclusion in the action agenda not later than July 1, 2008. [2007 c 341 s 8.]

RCW 90.71.270 Science panel—Creation—Membership. (1) The council shall appoint a nine-member Puget Sound science panel to provide independent, nonrepresentational scientific advice to the council and expertise in identifying environmental indicators and benchmarks for incorporation into the action agenda.

(2) In establishing the panel, the council shall request the Washington academy of sciences, created in chapter 70A.40 RCW, to nominate fifteen scientists with recognized expertise in fields of science essential to the recovery of Puget Sound. Nominees should reflect the full range of scientific and engineering disciplines involved in Puget Sound recovery. At a minimum, the Washington academy of sciences shall consider making nominations from scientists associated with federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, the business and environmental communities, members of the K-12, college, and university communities, and members of the board. The solicitation should be to all sectors, and candidates may be from all public and private sectors. Persons nominated by the Washington academy of sciences must disclose any potential conflicts of interest, and any financial relationship with any leadership councilmember, and disclose sources of current financial support and contracts relating to Puget Sound recovery.

(3) The panel shall select a chair and a vice chair. Panel members shall serve four-year terms, except that the council shall

determine initial terms of two, three, and four years to provide for staggered terms. The council shall determine reappointments and select replacements or additional members of the panel. No panel member may serve longer than twelve years.

(4) The executive director shall designate a lead staff scientist to coordinate panel actions, and administrative staff to support panel activities. The legislature intends to provide ongoing funding for staffing of the panel to ensure that it has sufficient capacity to provide independent scientific advice.

(5) The executive director of the partnership and the science panel shall explore a shared state and federal responsibility for the staffing and administration of the panel. In the event that a federally sponsored Puget Sound recovery office is created, the council may propose that such office provide for staffing and administration of the panel.

(6) The panel shall assist the council in developing and revising the action agenda, making recommendations to the action agenda, and making recommendations to the council for updates or revisions.

(7) Members of the panel shall be reimbursed for travel expenses under RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060, and based upon the availability of funds, the council may contract with members of the panel for compensation for their services under *chapter 39.29 RCW. If appointees to the panel are employed by the federal, state, tribal, or local governments, the council may enter into interagency personnel agreements. [2020 c 20 s 1507; 2007 c 341 s 9.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 39.29 RCW was repealed by 2012 c 224 s 29, effective January 1, 2013. See chapter 39.26 RCW.

RCW 90.71.280 Science panel—Duties. (1) The panel shall:

(a) Assist the council, board, and executive director in carrying out the obligations of the partnership, including preparing and updating the action agenda;

(b) As provided in RCW 90.71.290, assist the partnership in developing an ecosystem level strategic science program that:

(i) Addresses monitoring, modeling, data management, and research; and

(ii) Identifies science gaps and recommends research priorities;

(c) Develop and provide oversight of a competitive peer-reviewed process for soliciting, strategically prioritizing, and funding research and modeling projects;

(d) Develop and implement an appropriate process for peer review of monitoring, research, and modeling conducted as part of the strategic science program;

(e) Provide input to the executive director in developing quadrennial implementation strategies; and

(f) Offer an ecosystem-wide perspective on the science work being conducted in Puget Sound and by the partnership.

(2) The panel should collaborate with other scientific groups and consult other scientists in conducting its work. To the maximum extent possible, the panel should seek to integrate the state-sponsored Puget Sound science program with the Puget Sound science activities of federal agencies, including working toward an integrated research agenda and Puget Sound science work plan.

(3) By July 31, 2008, the panel shall identify environmental indicators measuring the health of Puget Sound, and recommend

environmental benchmarks that need to be achieved to meet the goals of the action agenda. The council shall confer with the panel on incorporating the indicators and benchmarks into the action agenda. [2017 c 54 s 2; 2009 c 99 s 2; 2007 c 341 s 10.]

RCW 90.71.290 Science panel—Strategic science program—Puget Sound science update—Quadrennial science work plan.

(1) The strategic science program shall be developed by the panel with assistance and staff support provided by the executive director. The science program may include:

(a) Continuation of the Puget Sound assessment and monitoring program, as provided in RCW 90.71.060, as well as other monitoring or modeling programs deemed appropriate by the executive director;

(b) Development of a monitoring program, in addition to the provisions of RCW 90.71.060, including baselines, protocols, guidelines, and quantifiable performance measures, to be recommended as an element of the action agenda;

(c) Recommendations regarding data collection and management to facilitate easy access and use of data by all participating agencies and the public; and

(d) A list of critical research needs.

(2) The strategic science program may not become an official document until a majority of the members of the council votes for its adoption.

(3) A Puget Sound science update shall be developed by the panel with assistance and staff support provided by the executive director. The panel shall submit the initial update to the executive director by April 2010, and subsequent updates as necessary to reflect new scientific understandings. The update shall:

(a) Describe the current scientific understanding of various physical attributes of Puget Sound;

(b) Serve as the scientific basis for the selection of environmental indicators measuring the health of Puget Sound; and

(c) Serve as the scientific basis for the status and trends of those environmental indicators.

(4) The executive director shall provide the Puget Sound science update to the Washington academy of sciences, the governor, and appropriate legislative committees, and include:

(a) A summary of information in existing updates; and

(b) Changes adopted in subsequent updates and in the state of the Sound reports produced pursuant to RCW 90.71.370.

(5) A quadrennial science work plan shall be developed by the panel, with assistance and staff support provided by the executive director, and approved by the council. The quadrennial science work plan shall include, at a minimum:

(a) Identification of recommendations from scientific and technical reports relating to Puget Sound;

(b) A description of the Puget Sound science-related activities being conducted by various entities in the region, including studies, models, monitoring, research, and other appropriate activities;

(c) A description of whether the ongoing work addresses the recommendations and, if not, identification of necessary actions to fill gaps;

(d) Identification of specific quadrennial science work actions to be done over the course of the work plan, and how these actions address science needs in Puget Sound; and

(e) Recommendations for improvements to the ongoing science work in Puget Sound. [2017 c 54 s 3; 2007 c 341 s 11.]

RCW 90.71.300 Action agenda—Goals and objectives. (1) The action agenda shall consist of the goals and objectives in this section, implementation strategies to meet measurable outcomes, benchmarks, and identification of responsible entities. By 2020, the action agenda shall strive to achieve the following goals:

(a) A healthy human population supported by a healthy Puget Sound that is not threatened by changes in the ecosystem;

(b) A quality of human life that is sustained by a functioning Puget Sound ecosystem;

(c) Healthy and sustaining populations of native species in Puget Sound, including a robust food web;

(d) A healthy Puget Sound where freshwater, estuary, nearshore, marine, and upland habitats are protected, restored, and sustained;

(e) An ecosystem that is supported by groundwater levels as well as river and streamflow levels sufficient to sustain people, fish, and wildlife, and the natural functions of the environment;

(f) Fresh and marine waters and sediments of a sufficient quality so that the waters in the region are safe for drinking, swimming, shellfish harvest and consumption, and other human uses and enjoyment, and are not harmful to the native marine mammals, fish, birds, and shellfish of the region.

(2) The action agenda shall be developed and implemented to achieve the following objectives:

(a) Protect existing habitat and prevent further losses;

(b) Restore habitat functions and values;

(c) Significantly reduce toxics entering Puget Sound fresh and marine waters;

(d) Significantly reduce nutrients and pathogens entering Puget Sound fresh and marine waters;

(e) Improve water quality and habitat by managing stormwater runoff;

(f) Provide water for people, fish and wildlife, and the environment;

(g) Protect ecosystem biodiversity and recover imperiled species; and

(h) Build and sustain the capacity for action. [2007 c 341 s 12.]

RCW 90.71.310 Action agenda—Development—Elements revision and updates. (1) The council shall develop a science-based action agenda that leads to the recovery of Puget Sound by 2020 and achievement of the goals and objectives established in RCW 90.71.300. The action agenda shall:

(a) Address all geographic areas of Puget Sound including upland areas and tributary rivers and streams that affect Puget Sound;

(b) Describe the problems affecting Puget Sound's health using supporting scientific data, and provide a summary of the historical environmental health conditions of Puget Sound so as to determine past

levels of pollution and restorative actions that have established the current health conditions of Puget Sound;

(c) Meet the goals and objectives described in RCW 90.71.300, including measurable outcomes for each goal and objective specifically describing what will be achieved, how it will be quantified, and how progress towards outcomes will be measured. The action agenda shall include near-term and long-term benchmarks designed to ensure continuous progress needed to reach the goals, objectives, and designated outcomes by 2020. The council shall consult with the panel in developing these elements of the plan;

(d) Identify and prioritize the strategies and actions necessary to restore and protect Puget Sound and to achieve the goals and objectives described in RCW 90.71.300;

(e) Identify the agency, entity, or person responsible for completing the necessary strategies and actions, and potential sources of funding;

(f) Include prioritized actions identified through the assembled proposals from each of the seven action areas and the identification and assessment of ecosystem scale programs as provided in RCW 90.71.260;

(g) Include specific actions to address aquatic rehabilitation zone one, as defined in RCW 90.88.010;

(h) Incorporate any additional goals adopted by the council; and

(i) Incorporate appropriate actions to carry out the quadrennial science work plan created in RCW 90.71.290.

(2) In developing the action agenda and any subsequent revisions, the council shall, when appropriate, incorporate the following:

(a) Water quality, water quantity, sediment quality, watershed, marine resource, and habitat restoration plans created by governmental agencies, watershed groups, and marine and shoreline groups. The council shall consult with the board in incorporating these plans;

(b) Recovery plans for salmon, orca, and other species in Puget Sound listed under the federal endangered species act;

(c) Existing plans and agreements signed by the governor, the commissioner of public lands, other state officials, or by federal agencies;

(d) Appropriate portions of the Puget Sound water quality management plan existing on July 1, 2007.

(3) Until the action agenda is adopted, the existing Puget Sound management plan and the 2007-09 Puget Sound biennial plan shall remain in effect. The existing Puget Sound management plan shall also continue to serve as the comprehensive conservation and management plan for the purposes of the national estuary program described in section 320 of the federal clean water act, until replaced by the action agenda and approved by the United States environmental protection agency as the new comprehensive conservation and management plan.

(4) The council shall adopt the action agenda by December 1, 2008. The council shall revise the action agenda as needed, and revise the implementation strategies every four years using an adaptive management process informed by tracking actions and monitoring results in Puget Sound. In revising the action agenda and the implementation strategies, the council shall consult the panel and the board and provide opportunity for public review and comment. Quadrennial updates shall:

(a) Contain a detailed description of prioritized actions necessary in the quadrennial time period to achieve the goals,

objectives, outcomes, and benchmarks of progress identified in the action agenda;

(b) Identify the agency, entity, or person responsible for completing the necessary action; and

(c) Establish quadrennial benchmarks for near-term actions.

(5) The action agenda shall be organized and maintained in a single document to facilitate public accessibility to the plan. [2017 c 54 s 4; 2008 c 329 s 926; 2007 c 341 s 13.]

Severability—Effective date—2008 c 329: See notes following RCW 28B.105.110.

RCW 90.71.320 Action agenda—Biennial budget requests. (1)

State agencies responsible for implementing elements of the action agenda shall:

(a) Provide to the partnership by June 1st of each even-numbered year their estimates of the actions and the budget resources needed for the forthcoming biennium to implement their portion of the action agenda; and

(b) Work with the partnership in the development of biennial budget requests to achieve consistency with the action agenda to be submitted to the governor for consideration in the governor's biennial budget request. The agencies shall seek the concurrence of the partnership in the proposed funding levels and sources included in this proposed budget.

(2) If a state agency submits an amount different from that developed in subsection (1) (a) of this section as part of its biennial budget request, the partnership and state agency shall jointly identify the differences and the reasons for these differences and present this information to the office of financial management by October 1st of each even-numbered year. [2007 c 341 s 14.]

RCW 90.71.330 Funding from partnership—Accountability. (1) Any

funding made available directly to the partnership from the Puget Sound recovery account created in RCW 90.71.400 and used by the partnership for loans, grants, or funding transfers to other entities shall be prioritized according to the action agenda developed pursuant to RCW 90.71.310.

(2) The partnership shall condition, with interagency agreements, any grants or funding transfers to other entities from the Puget Sound recovery account to ensure accountability in the expenditure of the funds and to ensure that the funds are used by the recipient entity in the manner determined by the partnership to be the most consistent with the priorities of the action agenda. Any conditions placed on federal funding under this section shall incorporate and be consistent with requirements under signed agreements between the entity and the federal government.

(3) If the partnership finds that the provided funding was not used as instructed in the interagency agreement, the partnership may suspend or further condition future funding to the recipient entity.

(4) The partnership shall require any entity that receives funds for implementing the action agenda to publicly disclose and account for expenditure of those funds. [2007 c 341 s 15.]

RCW 90.71.340 Fiscal accountability—Fiscal incentives and disincentives for implementation of the action agenda. (1) The legislature intends that fiscal incentives and disincentives be used as accountability measures designed to achieve consistency with the action agenda by:

(a) Ensuring that projects and activities in conflict with the action agenda are not funded;

(b) Aligning environmental investments with strategic priorities of the action agenda; and

(c) Using state grant and loan programs to encourage consistency with the action agenda.

(2) The council shall adopt measures to ensure that funds appropriated for implementation of the action agenda and identified by proviso or specifically referenced in the omnibus appropriations act pursuant to RCW 43.88.030(1)(g) are expended in a manner that will achieve the intended results. In developing such performance measures, the council shall establish criteria for the expenditure of the funds consistent with the responsibilities and timelines under the action agenda, and require reporting and tracking of funds expended. The council may adopt other measures, such as requiring interagency agreements regarding the expenditure of provided or specifically referenced Puget Sound funds.

(3) The partnership shall work with other state agencies providing grant and loan funds or other financial assistance for projects and activities that impact the health of the Puget Sound ecosystem under chapters 43.155, 70A.305, 70A.135, 77.85, 79.105, 79A.15, 89.08, and 90.50A RCW to, within the authorities of the programs, develop consistent funding criteria that prohibits funding projects and activities that are in conflict with the action agenda.

(4) The partnership shall develop a process and criteria by which entities that consistently achieve outstanding progress in implementing the action agenda are designated as Puget Sound partners. State agencies shall work with the partnership to revise their grant, loan, or other financial assistance allocation criteria to create a preference for entities designated as Puget Sound partners for funds allocated to the Puget Sound basin, pursuant to RCW 43.155.070, 70A.305.180, 70A.305.190, 70A.305.200, 70A.135.070, 77.85.130, 79.105.150, 79A.15.040, 89.08.520, and 90.50A.040. This process shall be developed on a timeline that takes into consideration state grant and loan funding cycles.

(5) Any entity that receives state funds to implement actions required in the action agenda shall report biennially to the council on progress in completing the action and whether expected results have been achieved within the time frames specified in the action agenda. [2020 c 20 s 1508; 2007 c 341 s 16.]

RCW 90.71.350 Accountability for achieving and implementing action agenda—Noncompliance. (1) The council is accountable for achieving the action agenda. The legislature intends that all governmental entities within Puget Sound will exercise their existing authorities to implement the applicable provisions of the action agenda.

(2) The partnership shall involve the public and implementing entities to develop standards and processes by which the partnership will determine whether implementing entities are taking actions

consistent with the action agenda and achieving the outcomes identified in the action agenda. Among these measures, the council may hold management conferences with implementing entities to review and assess performance in undertaking implementation strategies with a particular focus on compliance with and enforcement of existing laws. Where the council identifies an inconsistency with the action agenda, the council shall offer support and assistance to the entity with the objective of remedying the inconsistency. The results of the conferences shall be included in the state of the Sound report required under RCW 90.71.370.

(3) In the event the council determines that an entity is in substantial noncompliance with the action agenda, it shall provide notice of this finding and supporting information to the entity. The council or executive director shall thereafter meet and confer with the entity to discuss the finding and, if appropriate, develop a corrective action plan. If no agreement is reached, the council shall hold a public meeting to present its findings and the proposed corrective action plan. If the entity is a state agency, the meeting shall include representatives of the governor's office and office of financial management. If the entity is a local government, the meeting shall be held in the jurisdiction and electoral representatives from the jurisdictions shall be invited to attend. If, after this process, the council finds that substantial noncompliance continues, the council shall issue written findings and document its conclusions. The council may recommend to the governor that the entity be ineligible for state financial assistance until the substantial noncompliance is remedied. Instances of noncompliance shall be included in the state of the Sound report required under RCW 90.71.370.

(4) The council shall provide a forum for addressing and resolving problems, conflicts, or a substantial lack of progress in a specific area that it has identified in the implementation of the action agenda, or that citizens or implementing entities bring to the council. The council may use conflict resolution mechanisms such as but not limited to, technical and financial assistance, facilitated discussions, and mediation to resolve the conflict. Where the parties and the council are unable to resolve the conflict, and the conflict significantly impairs the implementation of the action agenda, the council shall provide its analysis of the conflict and recommendations resolution to the governor, the legislature, and to those entities with jurisdictional authority to resolve the conflict.

(5) When the council or an implementing entity identifies a statute, rule, ordinance or policy that conflicts with or is an impediment to the implementation of the action agenda, or identifies a deficiency in existing statutory authority to accomplish an element of the action agenda, the council shall review the matter with the implementing entities involved. The council shall evaluate the merits of the conflict, impediment, or deficiency, and make recommendations to the legislature, governor, agency, local government or other appropriate entity for addressing and resolving the conflict.

(6) The council may make recommendations to the governor and appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives for local or state administrative or legislative actions to address barriers it has identified to successfully implementing the action agenda. [2007 c 341 s 17.]

RCW 90.71.360 Limitations on authority. (1) The partnership shall not have regulatory authority nor authority to transfer the responsibility for, or implementation of, any state regulatory program, unless otherwise specifically authorized by the legislature.

(2) The action agenda may not create a legally enforceable duty to review or approve permits, or to adopt plans or regulations. The action agenda may not authorize the adoption of rules under chapter 34.05 RCW creating a legally enforceable duty applicable to the review or approval of permits or to the adoption of plans or regulations. No action of the partnership may alter the forest practices rules adopted pursuant to chapter 76.09 RCW, or any associated habitat conservation plan. Any changes in forest practices identified by the processes established in this chapter as necessary to fully recover the health of Puget Sound by 2020 may only be realized through the processes established in RCW 76.09.370 and other designated processes established in Title 76 RCW. Nothing in this subsection or subsection (1) of this section limits the accountability provisions of this chapter.

(3) Nothing in this chapter limits or alters the existing legal authority of local governments, nor does it create a legally enforceable duty upon local governments. When a local government proposes to take an action inconsistent with the action agenda, it shall inform the council and identify the reasons for taking the action. If a local government chooses to take an action inconsistent with the action agenda or chooses not to take action required by the action agenda, it will be subject to the accountability measures in this chapter which can be used at the discretion of the council.
[2007 c 341 s 18.]

RCW 90.71.370 Report to the governor and legislature—State of the Sound report—Review of programs. (1) By December 1, 2008, and by September 1st of each even-numbered year beginning in 2010, the council must provide to the governor and the appropriate fiscal committees of the senate and house of representatives its recommendations for the funding necessary to implement the action agenda in the succeeding biennium. The recommendations must:

(a) Identify the funding needed by action agenda element;
(b) Address funding responsibilities among local, state, and federal governments, as well as nongovernmental funding; and
(c) Address funding needed to support the work of the partnership, the panel, the ecosystem work group, and entities assisting in coordinating local efforts to implement the plan.

(2) In the 2008 report required under subsection (1) of this section, the council must include recommendations for projected funding needed through 2020 to implement the action agenda; funding needs for science panel staff; identify methods to secure stable and sufficient funding to meet these needs; and include proposals for new sources of funding to be dedicated to Puget Sound protection and recovery. In preparing the science panel staffing proposal, the council must consult with the panel.

(3) By November 1st of each odd-numbered year beginning in 2009, the council must produce a state of the Sound report that includes, at a minimum:

(a) An assessment of progress by state and nonstate entities in implementing the action agenda, including accomplishments in the use of state funds for action agenda implementation;

(b) A description of actions by implementing entities that are inconsistent with the action agenda and steps taken to remedy the inconsistency;

(c) The comments by the panel on progress in implementing the plan, as well as findings arising from the assessment and monitoring program;

(d) A review of citizen concerns provided to the partnership and the disposition of those concerns;

(e) A review of the expenditures of funds to state agencies for the implementation of programs affecting the protection and recovery of Puget Sound, and an assessment of whether the use of the funds is consistent with the action agenda; and

(f) An identification of all funds provided to the partnership, and recommendations as to how future state expenditures for all entities, including the partnership, could better match the priorities of the action agenda.

(4) (a) The council must review state programs that fund facilities and activities that may contribute to action agenda implementation. By November 1, 2009, the council must provide initial recommendations regarding program changes to the governor and appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the senate and house of representatives. By November 1, 2010, the council must provide final recommendations regarding program changes, including proposed legislation to implement the recommendation, to the governor and appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the senate and house of representatives.

(b) The review in this subsection must be conducted with the active assistance and collaboration of the agencies administering these programs, and in consultation with local governments and other entities receiving funding from these programs:

(i) Water pollution control facilities financing, chapter 70A.135 RCW;

(ii) The water pollution control revolving fund, chapter 90.50A RCW;

(iii) The public works assistance account, chapter 43.155 RCW;

(iv) The aquatic lands enhancement account, RCW 79.105.150;

(v) The model toxics control operating, capital, and stormwater accounts and clean-up program, chapter 70A.305 RCW;

(vi) The acquisition of habitat conservation and outdoor recreation land, chapter 79A.15 RCW;

(vii) The salmon recovery funding board, RCW 77.85.110 through 77.85.150;

(viii) The community economic revitalization board, chapter 43.160 RCW;

(ix) Other state financial assistance to water quality-related projects and activities; and

(x) Water quality financial assistance from federal programs administered through state programs or provided directly to local governments in the Puget Sound basin.

(c) The council's review must include but not be limited to:

(i) Determining the level of funding and types of projects and activities funded through the programs that contribute to implementation of the action agenda;

(ii) Evaluating the procedures and criteria in each program for determining which projects and activities to fund, and their relationship to the goals and priorities of the action agenda;

(iii) Assessing methods for ensuring that the goals and priorities of the action agenda are given priority when program funding decisions are made regarding water quality-related projects and activities in the Puget Sound basin and habitat-related projects and activities in the Puget Sound basin;

(iv) Modifying funding criteria so that projects, programs, and activities that are inconsistent with the action agenda are ineligible for funding;

(v) Assessing ways to incorporate a strategic funding approach for the action agenda within the outcome-focused performance measures required by RCW 43.41.270 in administering natural resource-related and environmentally based grant and loan programs.

(5) During the 2009-2011 fiscal biennium, the council's review must result in a ranking of projects affecting the protection and recovery of the Puget Sound basin that are proposed in the governor's capital budget submitted under RCW 43.88.060. The ranking must include recommendations for reallocation of total requested funds for Puget Sound basin projects to achieve the greatest positive outcomes for protection and recovery of Puget Sound and must be submitted to the appropriate fiscal committees of the legislature no later than February 1, 2011.

(6) During the 2011-2013 fiscal biennium, the council must by November 1, 2012, produce the state of the Sound report as defined in subsection (3) of this section. [2020 c 20 s 1509; 2019 c 422 s 412; 2011 1st sp.s. c 50 s 977; 2010 1st sp.s. c 36 s 6013; 2009 c 479 s 74; 2008 c 329 s 927; 2007 c 341 s 19.]

Effective date—Intent—2019 c 422: See notes following RCW 82.21.010.

Effective dates—2011 1st sp.s. c 50: See note following RCW 15.76.115.

Effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 36: See note following RCW 43.155.050.

Effective date—2009 c 479: See note following RCW 2.56.030.

Severability—Effective date—2008 c 329: See notes following RCW 28B.105.110.

RCW 90.71.380 Assessment of basin-wide restoration progress. By December 1, 2010, and subject to available funding, the Washington academy of sciences shall conduct an assessment of basin-wide restoration progress. The assessment shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the extent to which implementation of the action agenda is making progress toward the action agenda goals, and a determination of whether the environmental indicators and benchmarks included in the action agenda accurately measure and reflect progress toward the action agenda goals. [2007 c 341 s 20.]

RCW 90.71.390 Performance audits of the partnership. (1) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall conduct two performance audits of the partnership, with the first audit to be completed by December 1, 2011, and the second to be completed by December 1, 2016.

(2) The audit shall include but not be limited to:

(a) A determination of the extent to which funds expended by the partnership or provided in biennial budget acts expressly for implementing the action agenda have contributed toward meeting the scientific benchmarks and the recovery goals of the action agenda;

(b) A determination of the efficiency and effectiveness of the partnership's oversight of action agenda implementation, based upon the achievement of the objectives as measured by the established environmental indicators and benchmarks; and

(c) Any recommendations for improvements in the partnership's performance and structure, and to provide accountability for action agenda results by action entities.

(3) The partnership may use the audits as the basis for developing changes to the action agenda, and may submit any recommendations requiring legislative policy or budgetary action to the governor and to the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives. [2007 c 341 s 21.]

RCW 90.71.400 Puget Sound recovery account. The Puget Sound recovery account is created in the state treasury. To the account shall be deposited such funds as the legislature directs or appropriates to the account. Federal grants, gifts, or other financial assistance received by the Puget Sound partnership and other state agencies from nonstate sources for the specific purpose of recovering Puget Sound may be deposited into the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used for the protection and recovery of Puget Sound. [2007 c 341 s 23.]

RCW 90.71.410 Lake Whatcom phosphorus loading demonstration program. (1) The partnership shall assist the city of Bellingham and Whatcom county to implement a demonstration program regarding phosphorus loading into Lake Whatcom. The partnership shall assist the city and county to secure funding from federal and nongovernmental sources and work to secure funding commitments from the city and county as well. The demonstration program must be implemented by the city and the county and include elements for prevention, education, compliance, and monitoring to reduce to a minimum the introduction of phosphorus-bearing materials into Lake Whatcom. The partnership shall share the results of this program with other jurisdictions in Puget Sound seeking to reduce phosphorus loading.

(2) Any grant made under this section must be matched by at least an equal amount from nonstate sources. [2009 c 48 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2009 c 48: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) The Puget Sound 2020 action agenda identifies water pollution as a primary threat to the health of Puget Sound and restoration of polluted waters as a top priority;

(b) Lake Whatcom is the drinking water reservoir for the city of Bellingham and the Lake Whatcom watershed provides fresh drinking water to one-half the population of Whatcom county;

(c) Whatcom creek flows out of Lake Whatcom and directly into Bellingham Bay which is the subject of a multiagency clean-up effort, the Bellingham Bay demonstration pilot project;

(d) The Puget Sound 2020 action agenda's area profile for Whatcom county identifies phosphorous pollution of Lake Whatcom as a key threat;

(e) Silver Beach creek is a major tributary to Lake Whatcom and its watershed is shared by the city of Bellingham and Whatcom county;

(f) Two decades of monitoring has shown that Silver Beach creek has some of the highest phosphorus loading of Lake Whatcom tributaries;

(g) Implementation of the recently completed watershed management plan and water cleanup plan for Lake Whatcom is identified as a priority strategy in the Puget Sound 2020 action agenda's priorities for Whatcom county; and

(h) Implementation of operations and management plans to manage on-site sewage systems around Lake Whatcom is identified as a key restoration strategy in Whatcom county.

(2) The legislature intends by this act to assist the city of Bellingham and Whatcom county in implementing a demonstration program to reduce phosphorus loading in the Lake Whatcom and Whatcom creek watershed and to share the lessons learned from this program with other jurisdictions in the Puget Sound basin working to reduce phosphorus loading." [2009 c 48 s 1.]

RCW 90.71.420 Report to the legislature. Nothing in this chapter may be construed to relieve the partnership of the need to provide a written report to the legislature each biennium pursuant to RCW 90.71.370(3), which must also include references to ongoing science-related activities and monitoring efforts that inform the findings of the report. [2017 c 54 s 5.]

RCW 90.71.430 Environmental justice obligations of the Puget Sound partnership. The partnership must apply and comply with the substantive and procedural requirements of chapter 70A.02 RCW. [2021 c 314 s 10.]

Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 314: See note following RCW 70A.02.005.

RCW 90.71.904 Transfer of powers, duties, and functions—References to chair of the Puget Sound action team. (1) The Puget Sound action team is hereby abolished and its powers, duties, and functions are hereby transferred to the Puget Sound partnership as consistent with this chapter. All references to the chair or the Puget Sound action team in the Revised Code of Washington shall be construed to mean the executive director or the Puget Sound partnership.

(2) (a) All employees of the Puget Sound action team are transferred to the jurisdiction of the Puget Sound partnership.

(b) All reports, documents, surveys, books, records, files, papers, or written material in the possession of the Puget Sound action team shall be delivered to the custody of the Puget Sound partnership. All cabinets, furniture, office equipment, motor vehicles, and other tangible property employed by the Puget Sound action team shall be made available to the Puget Sound partnership. All funds, credits, or other assets held by the Puget Sound action team shall be assigned to the Puget Sound partnership.

(c) Any appropriations made to the Puget Sound action team shall, on July 1, 2007, be transferred and credited to the Puget Sound partnership.

(d) If any question arises as to the transfer of any personnel, funds, books, documents, records, papers, files, equipment, or other tangible property used or held in the exercise of the powers and the performance of the duties and functions transferred, the director of financial management shall make a determination as to the proper allocation and certify the same to the state agencies concerned.

(3) All rules and all pending business before the Puget Sound action team shall be continued and acted upon by the Puget Sound partnership. All existing contracts and obligations shall remain in full force and shall be performed by the Puget Sound partnership.

(4) The transfer of the powers, duties, functions, and personnel of the Puget Sound action team shall not affect the validity of any act performed before July 1, 2007.

(5) If apportionments of budgeted funds are required because of the transfers directed by this section, the director of financial management shall certify the apportionments to the agencies affected, the state auditor, and the state treasurer. Each of these shall make the appropriate transfer and adjustments in funds and appropriation accounts and equipment records in accordance with the certification.

(6) Nothing contained in this section may be construed to alter any existing collective bargaining unit or the provisions of any existing collective bargaining agreement until the agreement has expired or until the bargaining unit has been modified by action of the public employment relations commission as provided by law. [2007 c 341 s 41.]

RCW 90.71.907 Effective date—2007 c 341. 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 July 1, 2007. [2007 c 341 s 70.]