



2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Counties Support Climate Commitment Act Funding Investments

Counties are regional governments. They are uniquely positioned to support a variety of state investments in projects, programs, and activities to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change. We support targeted appropriations of Climate Commitment Act revenues that include multiple benefits. We encourage the legislature to invest funding in efforts counties identify as urgent and have great benefits in meeting our collective climate goals.



Encumbered State Forest Lands Replacement

Over half of Washington counties benefit from revenue derived from publicly-managed forestlands, directly supporting critical public services. That revenue is usually shared with schools, hospitals, fire districts, libraries, and others.

Nearly half of State Forestlands, the class of timberlands managed by the Department of Natural Resources for counties specifically, no longer produce revenue due to environmental restrictions. Other public forestlands that have provided revenue for counties and other services have also been impacted by environmental restrictions. The revenue loss, especially in rural, resource-industry-dependent regions, devastates local services and imperils rural economies and communities.

At the same time, Washington's forest lands are being converted to other uses at an alarming rate. When forest land is converted to other uses, we all lose benefits like carbon sequestration and storage, wildlife habitat, recreational access, and other ecosystem services those lands provide.

The Encumbered State Forest Lands Replacement Program has resulted in several significant purchases protecting existing forest lands from conversion to other uses while providing long-term revenue for resource-dependent rural communities.

FORESTLAND PURCHASES IN THE LAST TWO YEARS:



CLALLAM COUNTY

81.67 Acres



PACIFIC COUNTY

297.93 Acres
(2 purchases)



WAHKIAKUM COUNTY

8,294 Acres
(2 purchases)

Additional investment will add momentum to this highly successful program with immediate benefits for preserving working forestland, improving carbon sequestration and storage, and other environmental benefits.

WHAT COUNTIES NEED

\$65 Million

(Natural Climate Solutions Account Eligible)

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Fish Barrier Removal

Renewing access to spawning and rearing habitat is one of the best investments in salmon recovery. Opening access often shows immediate results. Counties spend millions annually correcting fish barriers on county roads, but it isn't enough. While the state has helped, more is needed.

The state is progressing in addressing the court-ordered obligation to repair state-owned culverts that block fish passage by 2030 in the fourteen counties surrounding Puget Sound. However, state funding hasn't been prioritized for other upstream and downstream barriers. Local governments place a high priority on repairing fish-blocking culverts. Studies have shown that for every fish barrier owned by the state, there are two other barriers downstream and five upstream. Counties and the state must coordinate efforts to simultaneously remove fish barriers in the same watersheds to achieve immediate and maximum benefits for salmon recovery.

More support will help counties align with state highway fish barrier projects to maximize and achieve meaningful short and long-term salmon recovery benefits.

WHAT COUNTIES NEED

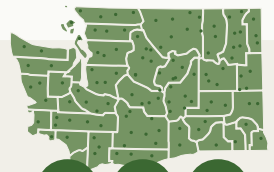
- ◎ **Fully fund the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board's project list** – \$30 million
- ◎ **Require WSDOT coordination with other fish barrier owners in the same watershed** – this will maximize the benefits of investments for salmon recovery by opening the entire watershed rather than simply fixing the state-owned barrier(s).
- ◎ **Eliminate state match and fund federal match requirements** – eliminating state match requirements and providing funding to be used to match federal grants will incentive project sponsors and maximize federal investment opportunities.
- ◎ **Fund climate resilient design** – preparing for climate resiliency in fish barrier replacements makes good sense, but increases near-term costs.

(Natural Climate Solutions Account Eligible)



1:7

For every WSDOT fish barrier, on average, there are seven other barriers on the same stream.



8,000

The approximate number of known local government-owned fish barriers.

\$1.8m

The average cost to correct 1 fish barrier.



\$14.4b

The current cost to correct all known local government-owned fish barriers.

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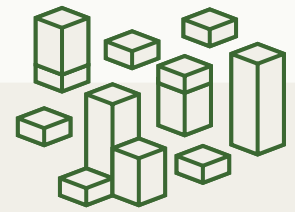
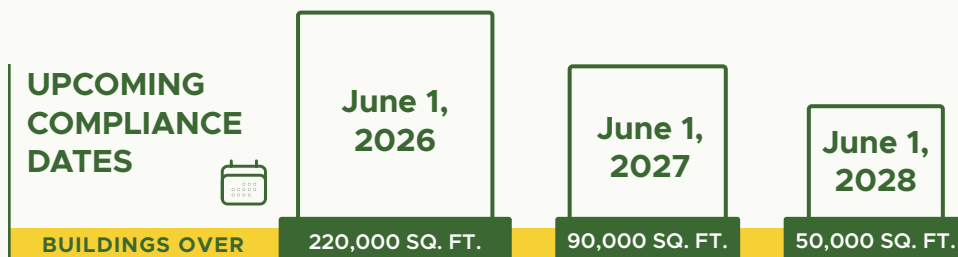


Clean Buildings Act Compliance

In 2019, the Legislature passed the Clean Buildings Act, requiring owners of large buildings to meet energy efficiency performance standards. The Act was expanded in 2022.

The building sector is the second largest contributor to our state's GHG emissions. The state has identified these standards as essential to meeting our state's climate goals.

Buildings over 20,000 square feet are implicated by the Act. Many county-owned public facilities easily exceed these size requirements and must comply. Across the state, county facilities are aging. Due to limited resources, many counties are not financially capable of investing in robust maintenance and regular updating for systems efficiency and modernization. The standards included in the Act will be cost-prohibitive for most counties to meet.



8,366
Number of Tier 1 Buildings
(over 50,000 sq. ft.)

PENALTIES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE



=

**\$5k + \$1 per
sq. ft. annually**

COUNTY ESTIMATES FOR TIER 1 COMPLIANCE ONLY

BENTON COUNTY \$10.8 MILLION	KITTITAS COUNTY \$3 MILLION	PIERCE COUNTY \$10.25 MILLION	SNOHOMISH COUNTY \$7.4 MILLION
SPOKANE COUNTY \$11.7 MILLION	WALLA WALLA COUNTY \$1 MILLION	WHATCOM COUNTY \$2 MILLION	YAKIMA COUNTY \$11 MILLION

Counties are facing substantial costs for compliance. Unfortunately, the passage of the new requirements did not include sufficient, reliable, ongoing funding resources for counties.

While the legislature did provide some funding for a grant program last year, it is well short of the need.

WHAT COUNTIES NEED

Help to meet the state-mandated energy performance standards requirements for existing public facilities.

(Climate Commitment Account Eligible)

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