

Climate Resilience Strategy – Engagement Plan DRAFT

October 2023

Considerations for Review

This document is a draft Engagement Plan that will support the Department of Ecology (Ecology) in its efforts to develop an updated state-wide Climate Resilience Strategy (strategy). Ecology is interested in any comments and feedback you can provide on this proposed plan, particularly the engagement goals, identified activities, and approach.

To help inform our engagement efforts, Ecology intends to develop a synthesis of existing plans, strategies, and other documents related to climate justice. If you are aware of any such documents, please share them with Ecology staff (Jimmy Kralj, 564-223-1961, jimmy.kralj@ecy.wa.gov).

We also intend to seek partnership with a Tribal-led organization to conduct a similar synthesis of plans, strategies, and other documents from Tribal governments and organizations related to climate resilience to help inform our engagement efforts. Please share any information about documents like these with Ecology staff (Jimmy Kralj, 564-223-1961, jimmy.kralj@ecy.wa.gov).

We are interested in learning about any upcoming meetings or events at which staff could discuss, share information, and solicit feedback on the strategy development process. If you or your organization know of any upcoming events, please share that information with Ecology staff (Jimmy Kralj, 564-223-1961, jimmy.kralj@ecy.wa.gov).

Engagement Activities and Timeline Summary

The graphic below provides a brief overview of the phases of engagement and associated activities for all interested parties, as well as activities specific to Tribal governments and communities as well as overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. Details about the different engagement phases and activities are described below.

	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
	<i>Phase 1</i>					<i>Phase 2</i>					
Engagement Activities for All Interested Parties	Presentations to Ongoing/Scheduled Meetings										
	Listening Sessions					Strategy Specific Information Sessions and Comment Opportunities					
	Surveys					Public Comment Period					
Activities Specific to Tribal Governments and Communities	Solicitation of plans, reports, or documents focused on climate resilience					Presentations to Intertribal Organizations					
	Presentations to Intertribal Organizations					Presentations to Intertribal Organizations					
	State-Tribal Climate Roundtable					Outreach to Individual Tribes and Tribal Affiliates					
	Outreach to Individual Tribes and Tribal Affiliates					Outreach to Individual Tribes and Tribal Affiliates					
Activities Specific to Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations	Listening Sessions										
	Solicitation of plans, reports, or documents focused on climate justice					Climate Justice and Equity Summit					
	Preparation for Climate Justice and Equity Summit					Climate Justice and Equity Summit					

Context: Key Groups for Engagement

Ecology is developing and implementing an update to the state's Integrated Climate Response Strategy in partnership with other state agencies¹ per [RCW 70A.05](#).

We're evaluating our existing work and identifying major gaps in what our state is doing to prepare for and adapt to climate change in an equitable manner to support communities, infrastructure, and natural systems in Washington.

Climate change impacts are not evenly distributed. They disproportionately impact Tribes, communities of color, low-income communities, and already overburdened communities worst and first. Due to a structural lack of resources and an ongoing history of discrimination, these same communities struggle to recover from climate fueled events like flooding or extreme heat or to take actions that reduce, prevent, or help them withstand future impacts.

The update to the strategy will rely on engagement to identify climate justice priorities and center climate justice in the proposed actions and goals. The updated strategy will allow Ecology and other state agencies to address disparities exacerbated by climate change and build a more resilient future for all Washingtonians. This engagement plan will provide focused, additional, and separate engagement opportunities to help gather input from frontline communities, vulnerable populations, and Tribal governments and communities. Additionally, Tribal governments are welcome to request formal government to government consultation with Ecology on the strategy at any time.

Ecology will engage and consult with communities and organizations across the state including Tribal nations, Tribal communities, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, public and private businesses, and overburdened communities (as defined in [RCW 70A.02.010](#)) through the development of the strategy to learn about climate resilience priorities, advance climate justice, and support overall strategy development. Additionally, the law requires Ecology to seek input from these groups on the Engagement Plan. Ecology will use input from these conversations, as well as feedback from partner agencies, to shape and refine this Engagement Plan.

What is Climate Resilience?

Climate resilience is a broad topic, and many actions, policies, and efforts can contribute towards building a more climate resilient future. For purposes of the development of the strategy, Ecology and partner agencies will use the following definition from [RCW 70A.65.010](#):

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

For natural systems, increasing climate resilience involves restoring and increasing the health, function, and integrity of our ecosystems and improving their ability to absorb and recover from climate-affected disturbances.

¹ Agriculture, Commerce, Emergency Management Division, Fish and Wildlife, Health, Natural Resources, Puget Sound Partnership, Transportation, and State Conservation Commission.

For communities, increasing climate resilience means enhancing their ability to understand, prevent, adapt, and recover from climate impacts to people and infrastructure.

Engagement Goals

The following are our draft engagement goals:

- To build a shared understanding of climate resilience between state agencies and Tribal nations, Tribal communities, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, public and private businesses, and overburdened communities across the state.
- For Ecology to learn from and listen to Tribal nations, Tribal communities, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, public and private businesses, and overburdened communities about their vision of climate resilience and climate justice.
- For communities and organizations across the state to understand the importance of their feedback in the development of the strategy and how it will be used.
- To build relationships and ongoing engagement forums with communities and organizations throughout the state that will inform our work including how the state coordinates and carries out actions, tracks and shares information on our progress, and seeks input on future updates of the strategy.

Proposed Areas for Engagement

Ecology proposes two primary engagement phases for all interested parties with activities specific to Tribal governments and communities as well as overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

During the initial phase of engagement, Ecology will seek feedback from Tribal nations, Tribal communities, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, public and private businesses, and overburdened communities on the following topics:

- Vision and goals for a climate resilient future.
- The primary climate impacts and associated concerns.
- Successes in building climate resilience.
- Barriers faced in building climate resilience.

During the second engagement phase, these audiences will be asked to provide feedback on the following areas:

- Identified draft strategies, proposed goals, and preliminary actions informed by phase 1 engagement.
- Whether or not these elements will help advance climate resilience and are aligned with the needs and priorities of Tribal nations, Tribal communities, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, public and private businesses, and overburdened communities.

How Engagement Will be Used

Conversations and information learned during the first engagement phase will be used by Ecology and partner agencies to develop the strategies, goals, and actions of the strategy. According to [RCW 70A.05](#), the state agencies involved in this process are limited to their existing statutory authority. However, information learned through engagement will be used to ensure the values of Tribal governments, vulnerable communities, and other organizations across the state are considered and reflected in the assessment of initial goals, priorities, and gaps to the extent practicable.

Later in the process, input and comments from phase 2 will be used to confirm that the draft strategies, goals, and actions developed by Ecology and partner agencies align with the vision and needs of communities and organizations. This feedback will be used to refine and finalize the strategies, goals, and actions contained within the strategy.

Why Engagement is Important

Engagement is critical in ensuring that Ecology and its agency partners produce a strategy that is actionable, impactful, and equitable. Additionally, engagement throughout the strategy development process will help establish ongoing opportunities for collaboration around climate resilience and climate justice issues. As a large state with a diverse geography, expected climate impacts in Washington are variable, and will be experienced differently by different communities across the state – due to structural obstacles and ongoing historical disparities that influence their exposure, sensitivity, and ability to adapt to changing conditions. As climate impacts continue to present challenges to our state, ongoing collaboration between Ecology and Tribal nations, Tribal communities, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, public and private businesses, and overburdened communities will be essential to ensure the state is supporting these groups to build climate resilience in an equitable and impactful manner.

Engagement with communities and organizations will ensure that Ecology and its agency partners consider a spectrum of climate impacts and the ways in which they effect communities. Collaboration will ideally lead to a suite of actions that should equitably address the most pressing challenges facing people in Washington.

Engagement from communities and organizations will also help state agencies build an effective funding strategy that will address inequities and bring resources to build climate resilience for the most vulnerable communities across the state.

Ongoing and Collaborative Engagement

Ecology will approach engagement during the coming months as an opportunity to inform initial strategy development, build relationships with communities and partners, and establish ongoing engagement channels around climate resilience to inform future strategy updates and related work.

The primary limiting factor in development of the strategy is time. [RCW 70A.05](#) requires the strategy be completed by September 30, 2024. This short timeline will necessitate a streamlined engagement approach to inform strategy development.

Despite the compressed timeline, engagement around climate resilience, and this strategy specifically, will not end after September 30, 2024. [RCW 70A.05](#) requires updates to the strategy

every four years along with biennial reporting. Therefore, this initial engagement approach will be the start of a longer, ongoing collaborative process about climate resilience between Ecology and Tribal nations, Tribal communities, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, public and private businesses, and overburdened communities.

How Will Engagement Opportunities be Shared?

Ecology will announce engagement opportunities through the following channels:

- Ecology website: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Air-Climate/Responding-to-climate-change/Washingtons-climate-strategy>
- Media releases
- Email list: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_305
- Social media updates
- List of Interested Parties
 - Ecology and staff from partner agencies have developed a list of individuals and organizations that will be used to share information about the strategy update process.

Engagement Activities for All Interested Parties – Phase 1

The first phase of engagement will be focused on identifying the priorities, visions, and barriers of communities and partners related to climate resilience. In recognition of the compressed timeline for strategy development, Ecology has outlined an array of activities for this phase to efficiently gather community feedback:

Listening Sessions

Ecology intends to host several listening sessions across the state, both online and in-person, to allow individuals, communities, and organizations to share their thoughts about strategy development. These listening sessions will likely be planned for fall 2023 and winter 2024. More information will be provided soon; please sign-up for email updates or visit the Ecology website (links provided above) to receive updates.

Presentations to Ongoing/Scheduled Meetings or Gatherings

Ecology wants to meet individuals and communities where they are. Please let us know if your organization or community has any upcoming meetings or events at which Ecology staff (or partner agency staff, as appropriate) could discuss the strategy development process and solicit feedback.

Surveys

To better understand the experiences of climate change from a wide range of individuals and communities, Ecology intends to develop and distribute a survey to collect information about climate resilience priorities, vision, and barriers. The survey will be hosted online and distributed via email; please sign-up for the climate change strategy email list using the website link above.

Engagement Activities for All Interested Parties – Phase 2

After receiving and synthesizing feedback from communities and organizations during phase 1, Ecology and partner agencies will use that information to develop a draft suite of strategies, goals, and actions to be included in the strategy.

Strategy Specific Listening Sessions and Comment Opportunities

During the second phase of engagement, Ecology will host a series of meetings and other engagement opportunities around the state, both online and in-person, focused on specific elements contained within the draft strategy. The purpose of these meetings will be for individuals and organizations to better understand how and why these elements were created and to be able to provide comments and feedback to inform Ecology and partner agencies as they continue developing the draft strategy updates.

Release of Draft Plan for Public Comment

Once a draft strategy has been developed by Ecology and partner agencies, the draft strategy will be released for public comment. The draft will include an executive summary, associated graphics, and translations will be made available. As part of this public comment period, Ecology will host meetings to provide additional opportunities for individuals and organizations to comment on the draft strategy. This is likely to occur in late-Spring or early-Summer 2024.

Engagement Opportunities Specific to Tribal Governments and Communities

Tribal governments are invited to request formal government to government consultation with Ecology on the strategy at any time. Ecology will also perform outreach and provide opportunities for tribal engagement as significant check points are completed during strategy development.

Recognizing their status as sovereign governments, Ecology will provide distinct opportunities for tribal governments to engage and coordinate with us in developing the draft strategy update. These include:

- State-Tribal Climate Roundtable – Ecology will use this forum convened by the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs to raise awareness of the process with tribal leaders and staff in fall 2023.
- Intertribal organizations – Ecology will request opportunities to present to tribal staff and at meetings of climate committees and related work groups such as the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Columbia Intertribal Fish Commission, and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI). Ecology presented at ATNI’s annual convention in September 2023.
- Individual tribal outreach – Ecology will use contact lists to share information about the strategy and engagement opportunities with each tribe and key tribal staff.
- Other tribal affiliates – Ecology will reach out to other consultants working for tribes, including contract lobbyists.

Ecology also recognizes that many tribal governments and organizations have conducted similar work regarding climate resilience planning. To help inform our engagement approach, Ecology is exploring opportunities to partner with a tribal-led organization to conduct a synthesis of tribal plans,

reports, and documents that can be used as a starting point to help gather additional tribal input. Please help Ecology by identifying any tribal plans, reports, or documents, particularly any existing work that synthesizes the climate resilience activities of multiple Tribes.

Engagement Opportunities Specific to Members of Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations

Ecology will also provide additional and focused engagement opportunities listed below for overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

Soliciting Climate Justice focused Plans, Reports, and Documents

Ecology recognizes that many communities and organizations in Washington have already spent time and effort thinking about climate resilience and how it relates to their unique needs and concerns related to climate justice. Therefore, as a first step in our engagement process, Ecology intends to solicit and review any available plans, reports, or other documents related to climate justice developed by communities and partners across the state. This process will enable Ecology to develop a synthesis of already articulated concerns and priorities from frontline communities to review with communities and organizations as a starting point for additional input and dialogue.

The following is an initial inventory of recent Washington-specific climate justice documents. Please share any additional climate justice plans, reports, or documents with Ecology staff (contact information below).

Initial resources identified include:

- [An Unfair Share: Exploring the Disproportionate Risks from Climate Change Facing Washington State Communities](#) (2018)
- [Understanding Community Perspectives on Climate Resilience in The Puget Sound Region of the Salish Sea](#) (2021) by Leah Wood and Shogofa Amini.
 - This includes the extensive list of additional local resources noted on page 33 by Front and Centered, Got Green, Puget Sound Sage, City of Tacoma, King County, the Washington Environmental Justice Task Force, and University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences.
- [Climate Justice in Growth Management](#) (2023) (appendix by Front and Centered)

Listening Sessions

In addition to hosting listening session for all interested parties (as noted above), Ecology will also host listening sessions focused exclusively on overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. Ecology intends to partner with an organization that works with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to help design and tailor these listening sessions for different audiences to provide opportunities for robust engagement. These listening sessions will likely be planned for fall 2023 and winter 2024. More information will be provided soon; please sign-up for email updates or visit the Ecology website (links provided above) to receive updates.

Climate Justice and Equity Summit

Prior to releasing a draft strategy for official public comment, Ecology intends to hold a climate justice summit with leaders of community-based organizations who work with overburdened

communities and vulnerable populations in Washington to ensure the draft aligns with the vision and needs expressed by these groups.

This Climate Justice and Equity Summit will provide communities and organizations with the opportunity to vet the draft strategy prior to its release for public comment. It is anticipated that this Engagement Summit will be an in-person meeting and likely occur in early spring 2024 (target: March 2024). Ecology intends to partner with an organization that works with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to co-design and help support this event.

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Contact Information

For more information about strategy development, this Engagement Plan, or to share information about available plans, reports, or documents as well as upcoming meetings and events, please contact:

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

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6831 or email at ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov. For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341. Visit Ecology's website for more information.

For more information or to request an interpreter, please contact Jimmy Kralj at 564-223-1961.

Para más información o para solicitar un intérprete, favor de comunicarse con Jimmy Kralj al 564-223-1961.

若需更多相關訊息或需翻譯員,請聯絡 Jimmy Kralj,電話: 564-223-1961.

Để biết thêm thông tin hoặc cần thông dịch viên, xin vui lòng liên hệ Jimmy Kralj tại số 564-223-1961.

보다 자세한 정보를 원하거나 통역이 필요하다면 Jimmy Kralj 씨에게 연락하십시오 564-223-1961.

Для получения дополнительной информации, пожалуйста, звоните Jimmy Kralj по телефону 564-223-1961 и попросите устного переводчика.