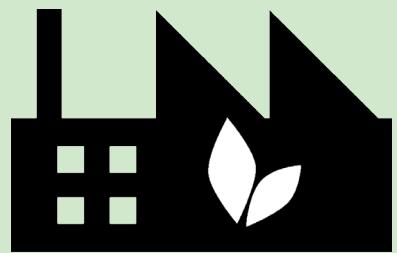


Create Climate Jobs



As energy policy changes in light of the climate crisis, the Legislature should support the notion that the jobs in the clean energy sector be well-paying, high-quality union jobs for those who construct, maintain, and operate modern energy facilities, schools, and factories. These priorities will help deliver on that promise by addressing two existential problems at once—runaway income inequality and climate disruption.

Siting and Permitting – While Washington state is a leader in environmental and energy policy, its siting and permitting processes have hindered the construction of the infrastructure necessary to realize the transition to a green energy economy. **HB 1216/SB 5380** seek to improve the permitting and siting of clean energy projects through the state's funding and completion of environmental reviews for a suite of technologies consistent with our climate and energy laws (e.g., wind, solar, energy storage technologies, transmission infrastructure, and green electrolytic hydrogen).

These reviews will help communities, developers, tribes, and state agencies understand appropriate sites for development and could be used to identify “least conflict” zones for future energy development. Further, the reviews will require agency coordination on mitigation options for developers, offering clarity, consistency and certainty to companies interested in doing business in Washington, while protecting our communities and our environment.

HB 1216/SB 5380 propose important efficiency amendments to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), including improved coordination with project proponents, as well as the removal of the municipal statement of need requirement. The bills promote further efficiencies by including timeline accountability requirements to existing agency permitting and siting processes.

Cumulatively, the investment, analysis and improvements achieved thought HB 1216/SB 5380 will make Washington a more economical and efficient landscape for responsible energy development, driving family-wage job creation as the state transitions to a clean energy future. These bills are the result of broad stakeholder engagement from labor, developer, environmental, and electric utility partners.



Specifically, HB 1216/SB 5380 would:

- Establish an interagency clean energy siting coordinating council to be co-chaired by the Departments of Ecology and Commerce.
- Direct Commerce to establish a program to designate Clean Energy Projects of Statewide Significance (CEPSS) and assign them a clean energy navigator. Ensure CEPSS are eligible for a coordinated permitting process overseen by Ecology, after the agency's initial assessment of the projects' likely permit application and review process.
- Amends SEPA provisions for certain clean energy projects to direct lead agencies to complete environmental impact statements (EIS) within 24 months and clarify the content of SEPA review for clean energy projects.
- Direct Ecology to prepare nonproject EIS for solar projects in the Columbia Basin and green electrolytic or renewable hydrogen projects, and direct the WSU energy program to conduct a least-conflict pumped storage siting process.



2023 Legislative Priorities of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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