

Environmental Justice Council

Legislative Session Procedure

Adopted November 21, 2024

1. Purpose and Background

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to guide Environmental Justice Council (Council) Members and Council staff in their communications with the Governor's Office, Legislature, and others regarding: (1) advocating for inclusion of the Council's budget recommendations in the final adopted budget and (2) communicating the Council's policy positions during legislative session.

Background:

The Healthy Environmental for All (HEAL) Act, [RCW 70A.02.110](#), and the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), [RCW 70A.65.040](#), give the Council statutory authority and direction to make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature in several areas:

- The Council may, in consultation with the HEAL Interagency Work Group, make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on ways to improve agency compliance with the HEAL Act;
- The Council may make recommendations for amendments to the HEAL Act, proposed laws, or other existing laws to promote environmental justice;
- The Council may recommend funding strategies and allocations to build capacity in vulnerable populations and overburdened communities to address environmental injustices;

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- The Council must provide recommendations to the Legislature, agencies, and the Governor on the development and implementation of the cap and invest program established in the CCA (RCW 70A.65.060 through 70A.65.210); and
- The Council must provide recommendations to the Legislature, agencies, and the Governor on the programs funded by the CCA accounts.

2. Procedure

2.1 Advocating for the Council's Budget Recommendations:

- The Council directs staff to advocate for the Council's budget recommendations to the Governor's Office, the Office of Financial Management, and the Legislature.
- Any Council Member who wishes to advocate for the Council's budget recommendations **on behalf of** the Council must inform and coordinate with the Council Executive Committee first. Council Members must clearly disclose that they are representing the Council (consistent with Article V of the Council's bylaws), and they must be familiar with and stick to sharing the information in the Council's formally adopted recommendations.
- Council Members may also represent their own or any other organization or affiliation in support of the Council's budget recommendations. In these cases, Council Members must clearly disclose to legislators, the Governor's Office, and agency staff that they are not representing the Council but rather their own or any other organization or affiliation (consistent with Article V of the Council's bylaws). Council Members should inform the Council Executive Committee of their intent to advocate for Council priorities.
- Any Council Member who receives questions from the Governor's Office, Office of Financial Management, legislators, or legislative staff about the Council's budget recommendations may respond, using the information in the Council's formally adopted 2025 budget recommendations and adopted Policy Statement and Procedure as a guide. Council Members who do provide responses to questions should inform Council staff for

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tracking and coordination purposes. Council Members may also refer the inquiry to staff for a response. Where there is no clear response, the Council Member must refer the question to the staff who will share it with the Council Executive Committee for a solution.

- Council staff will set up meetings with legislators serving on relevant policy and budget committees to share the Council's budget recommendations. In doing so, staff will coordinate and include Council Members in those meetings as Member interest, expertise, and availability permits. Council Members and staff who participate in meetings with legislators must file required lobbying reports with the Public Disclosure Commission.

2.2 Sharing the Council's Formally Adopted Policy Positions:

- As Council staff identify bills that have a specific impact to any of the Council's formally adopted policy positions, they will add them to the tracking list and analyze the bill to determine if Council action is warranted.
- The Council directs members of the Executive Committee to relay the Council's positions in letters to legislative committees, through written or verbal testimony during public hearings, and/or through meetings with legislators or the Governor's Office. As needed, Members of the Executive Committee may delegate to other Council Members the responsibility to relay the Council's positions. Council staff will support the Executive Committee and Council Members in relaying the Council's positions as needed.

2.3 Routine Staff Activities During Session:

- Council staff will monitor pre-filed bills and bill introductions to identify bills that affect the Council's membership, responsibilities, or authority or that are directly related to any of the Council's adopted policy positions.

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- Council staff will review budget bills as they are introduced and amended and identify where Council recommendations are included and where gaps remain.
- Council staff will track the progress of any relevant bills as they move through session.
- Council staff will maintain a log of any legislative inquiries to ensure timely response is provided.
- Council staff will complete fiscal notes when assigned. Staff will center environmental justice and equity when estimating costs (e.g., costs for interpretation and translation, Tribal and community engagement and co-creation, community stipends, etc.).
- Council staff will share regular legislative updates to the full Council throughout session by email and during Council meetings, and the legislative updates will include information on when Council Members coordinate with the Executive Committee to advocate for the Council's budget recommendations and/or policy positions as outlined above.

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