

Environmental Justice (EJ) Council

2025-2027 Agency Decision Package Endorsements

Adopted by the EJ Council on October 24, 2024

Endorsements are not in any priority order.

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Agency Decision Packages to Expand HEAL Implementation Capacity

1. Environmental Justice Council Staff (Operating)

Background and Rationale: The Environmental Justice Council (EJ Council) and HEAL Interagency Workgroup have significant statutory responsibilities under the HEAL Act, the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), and various budget provisos. The EJ Council also serves as a forum for communities and Tribes. As the EJ Council increases its outreach and as community trust grows, the EJ Council is seeing an exponential increase in the number of issues being brought to its attention that require staff time for research, follow-up, and reporting back to communities and Tribes. The EJ Council’s duties under the CCA require highly technical knowledge, raising the need for additional resources to contract with experts to ensure the EJ Council has the information it needs to make thoughtful and well-informed CCA recommendations. The EJ Council has submitted a Decision Package for \$3,564,000 of ongoing funding for an additional ten permanent FTE and personal service contracts for CCA subject matter expertise and language assistance services.

Proposal: The EJ Council recommends that the Governor and Legislature fund the “Environmental Justice Council Staff” Decision Package for \$3,564,000 of ongoing funding.

2. Washington State Department of Agriculture (Operating)—Advancing Equity and HEAL Act

Background and Rationale: The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) currently has a base budget of \$322,000 for HEAL implementation, which is enough to support 1.5 FTE across several programs. These staff are not dedicated to HEAL implementation, but rather have taken on HEAL related responsibilities in addition to other agency functions. After a thorough review of HEAL Act requirements and several years of coordinating with other agencies and receiving guidance and insights from the Office of Financial Management, the Office of Equity, and the Environmental Justice Council, WSDA has identified key needs for fully

implementing the HEAL Act and embodying environmental justice principles and priorities in core agency functions. WSDA has submitted a Decision Package for \$1,376,000 of ongoing funding for an additional four permanent FTE as well as funding for language assistance services and travel costs.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses WSDA’s “Advancing Equity and the HEAL Act” Decision Package for \$1,376,000 of ongoing funding.

3. Department of Ecology (Operating)—Environmental Justice Capacity

Background and Rationale: As Washington’s environmental protection agency, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) has a lead role in addressing environmental justice. Ecology’s current staffing model is not sufficient to comply with the HEAL Act. The agency has ongoing funding for environmental justice leads in only two of their 11 environmental programs and these staff spend roughly only half their time for HEAL Act compliance with the other half dedicated to other work priorities. The agency has identified additional capacity needs for EJ Assessments; budget equity; and strategic planning, metrics, and reporting. Ecology has submitted a Decision Package for \$2,114,000 for 6.0 additional FTE to provide subject matter expertise in programs with the highest environmental justice workloads.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses ECY’s “Environmental Justice Capacity” Decision Package for \$2,114,000 of ongoing funding.

4. Department of Health (Operating)—Healthy Environment for All Act

Background and Rationale: Current staffing levels at the Department of Health (DOH) do not support full compliance with the HEAL Act. In particular, as the agency increases the number of environmental justice assessments it conducts and identifies additional agency actions that need to comply with HEAL, DOH will need more staff to support the work. Additionally, the Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) map is a key resource for HEAL covered agencies. The agency needs additional information technology staff for EHD modernization, adding additional

features, and ongoing maintenance. Additional communication FTE are needed to support EHD map training and educational materials for HEAL agencies Tribes and communities. DOH has submitted a Decision Package for \$2,409,000 of ongoing funding to support 3.7 FTE as well as travel and community engagement costs.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses DOH’s “Healthy Environment for All Act” Decision Package for \$2,409,000 of ongoing funding.

5. Department of Commerce (Operating)—HEAL Act Compliance Staffing

Background and Rationale: The Department of Commerce (Commerce) has received one-time funding for HEAL implementation in each biennium since the HEAL Act passed. However, robust environmental justice assessments, budgeting, reporting, and performance improvement targets are ongoing and require ongoing support. Commerce has submitted a Decision Package for \$3,000,000 of ongoing funding to support 7.2 FTE to embed environmental justice consultants in each division to coach and track compliance with the HEAL Act, to provide environmental justice centered community engagement, and to collaborate with the Interagency Workgroup Group and Environmental Justice Council, as well as costs for community compensation and language assistance services.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses Commerce’s “HEAL Act Compliance Staffing” Decision Package for \$3,000,000 of ongoing funding.

Agency Decision Packages to Continue Previously Funded Projects Based on EJ Council Recommendations

6. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (Capital)—Equitable Access to Clean Air and Improving Classroom Air Quality

Background and Rationale: The Legislature appropriated \$45,025,000 million in the supplemental capital budget to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for the School District Indoor Air Quality and Energy Efficiency program. \$30 million was funded by the Climate Commitment Account (CCA) and does not take effect until January 1, 2025. The CCA funding included \$500,000 for air filtration systems with HEPA filters for schools near the SeaTac airport. OSPI has submitted a Decision Package for reappropriation of the \$45,025,000 in the 2025-2027 biennium.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses OSPI’s “Equitable Access to Clean Air & Improving classroom Air Quality” Capital Decision Package for \$45,025,000.

7. Department of Commerce (Capital)—Clean Energy Community Grant

Background and Rationale: The Legislature appropriated \$50 million in the supplemental capital budget for the Clean Energy Community Grant program aimed at promoting clean energy technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in vulnerable, overburdened, and Tribal communities. The innovative program provides flexible funding needed to create a place-based investments, which is a need identified by communities. Commerce has submitted a Decision Package for \$50 million to continue the program at maintenance level.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses Commerce’s “Clean Energy Community Grant” Capital Decision Package for \$50,000,000.

8. Department of Commerce (Operating)—Clean Energy Ambassadors

Background and Rationale: The Legislature funded the Clean Energy Ambassadors program in the 2024 supplemental budget; however, funding is not effective until January 2025. The purpose of the program is to create a cohort of local ambassadors to increase access to clean energy resources within Tribes and overburdened communities. The Department of Commerce (Commerce) has submitted a Decision Package for \$10 million to support the full launch and continuity of the program next biennium. The funding will support 1.65 FTE with the majority of funding distributed as grants to a cohort of intermediary organizations and entities that will hire Clean Energy Ambassadors.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses Commerce’s “Clean Energy Ambassadors” Decision Package for \$10,000,000.

9. Department of Commerce (Operating)—Continuation of CCA Dollars

Background and Rationale: The Department of Commerce’s Energy Division was assigned seven new provisos in the 2024 supplemental operating budget containing language prohibiting expenditure of funding until January 1, 2025. One of the provisos was for Energy Navigators and a second was for the creation of a web tool (FundHubWA) to assist grant seekers to identify opportunities for clean energy, clean technology, and climate related funding. These two provisos directly aligned with EJ Council budget recommendations. Because the full scope of work cannot be completed in the six-month period that will remain in the biennium, Commerce has submitted a Decision Package, titled “Continuation of CCA dollars” to complete the work in the 2025-2027 biennium. The Decision Package includes a request for \$2,730,000 for Energy Navigators and \$400,000 in FY2026 and \$100,000 in FY2027 and ongoing for the Grant/Incentive Web Portal.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses Commerce’s “Continuation of CCA Dollars” Decision Package, specifically the \$2,730,000 for Energy Navigators and the \$400,000 in FY26 and \$100,000 in FY27 and ongoing for the Grant/Incentive Web Portal.

10. Department of Health (Operating)—Lower Yakima Valley Safe Water

Background and Rationale: The Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area is impacted by nitrate groundwater contamination. In the 2024 supplemental operating budget, the Legislature provided an additional \$1 million for implementation of the Nitrate Hazard Mitigation Plan, including education and outreach, well testing, and provision of alternate water supplies. Current funding will allow for the testing of about 4,790 wells by the end of the fiscal year. The Department of Health (DOH) needs additional funding to complete implementation of the plan including testing of the remaining 3,310 wells and provide treatment options for homes that need it. DOH has submitted a Decision Package for \$2 million of one-time funding for 2.0 FTE and contract services for mailing, staffing of call centers conducting home visits, and water testing of wells. This aligns with the Council's 2024 budget recommendation on clean and safe drinking water.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses DOH's "Lower Yakima Valley Safe Water" Decision Package for \$2,000,000.

11. Department of Health (Operating)—Options for Tainted Drinking Water

Background and Rationale: Groundwater in more and more areas of the state is becoming increasingly contaminated with nitrate, PFAS, and other chemicals from industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities. The Legislature provided funding to the Department of Health (DOH) in the 2023-2025 biennial budget to assist with access to safe drinking water for those with individual wells or small water systems. DOH has submitted a Decision Package for \$1,624,000 of ongoing funding to continue the program beyond 2025. The funding will support 0.9 FTE along with costs for testing and treatment for an estimated 800 homes. This aligns with the Council's 2024 budget recommendation on clean and safe drinking water.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses DOH's "Options for Tainted Drinking Water" Decision Package for \$1,624,000.

12. Department of Health (Operating)—Community-led Health Equity Zones

Background and Rationale: The Health Equity Zones (HEZ) Initiative supports communities in implementing participatory decision-making to identify health priorities and solutions to improve health outcomes. The Department of Health (DOH) has convened a HEZ Community Advisory Council, which selected zones for rural communities (Whatcom County), urban communities (South King County), and a process for selecting a zone for Native communities. DOH has submitted a Decision Package for \$1,533,000 to support projects for the first cohort of zones. This aligns with the Council’s 2024 budget recommendation related to the Health Equity Zones Initiative.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses DOH’s “Community-led Health Equity Zones” Decision Package for \$1,533,000.

Agency Decision Packages that Directly Align with EJ Council Budget Recommendations for the 25-27 Biennium

13. Department of Natural Resources (Operating)—Rec Lands/Cultural Resources

Background and Rationale: At its September 26, 2024 meeting, the Council adopted a budget recommendation to support the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative, including significant investment for Tribal capacity grants, investments to facilitate cross partnership efforts, such as meeting facilitation, and agency funding for technical staffing, natural resource assessments, and recreation use data acquisition and management. The Initiative responds to requests from Tribes to improve management of recreation impacts on natural and cultural resources and on protected Tribal rights. In support of this effort, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has submitted a Decision Package for an additional \$637,000 for 1.63 new FTE to advance the work.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses DNR’s “Rec Lands/Cultural Resources” Decision Package for \$637,000.

14. Parks and Recreation Commission (Operating)—Tribal-State Lands

Stewardship

Background and Rationale: At its September 26, 2024 meeting, the Council adopted a budget recommendation to support the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative, including significant investment for Tribal capacity grants, investments to facilitate cross partnership efforts, such as meeting facilitation, and agency funding for technical staffing, natural resource assessments, and recreation use data acquisition and management. The Initiative responds to requests from Tribes to improve management of recreation impacts on natural and cultural resources and on protected Tribal rights. In support of this effort, the Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks) has submitted a Decision Package for an additional \$818,000 for 1.8 FTE to advance the work, including to complete natural resource and other impact assessments.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses State Park’s “Tribal-State Lands Stewardship” Decision Package for \$818,000.

15. Department of Fish and Wildlife (Operating)—Invest in Lands Stewardship

Background and Rationale: At its September 26, 2024 meeting, the Council adopted a budget recommendation to support the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative, including significant investment for Tribal capacity grants, investments to facilitate cross partnership efforts, such as meeting facilitation, and agency funding for technical staffing, natural resource assessments, and recreation use data acquisition and management. The Initiative responds to requests from Tribes to improve management of recreation impacts on natural and cultural resources and on protected Tribal rights. In support of this effort, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has submitted a Decision Package, “Invest in Land Stewardship,” which supports multiple initiatives, including the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses the pieces of DFW’s “Tribal-State Lands Stewardship” Decision Package that support the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative.

16. Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs (Operating)—Tribal State Lands Stewardship

Background and Rationale: At its September 26, 2024, meeting, the Council adopted a budget recommendation to support the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative, including significant investment for Tribal capacity grants; investments to facilitate cross-partnership efforts, such as meeting facilitation; and agency funding for technical staffing, natural resource assessments, and recreation use data acquisition and management. The Initiative responds to requests from Tribes to improve management of recreation impacts on natural and cultural resources and on protected Tribal rights. In support of this effort, the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA) has submitted a Decision Package, “Tribal State Lands Stewardship,” for \$3,916,000 to support pass-through funds to Tribes (\$3,400,000), contracted facilitation services (\$275,000), grant and contract management support within GOIA (\$190,000), and two annual State-Tribal leadership conferences (\$50,000).

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses GOIA’s “Tribal State Lands Stewardship” Decision Package for \$3,916,000.

17. Department of Fish and Wildlife (Operating)—Expanding Fish and Wildlife Police

Background and Rationale: At its September 26, 2024 meeting, the Council adopted a budget recommendation to support additional enforcement capacity at the Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Wildlife. The Council supports this increased enforcement capacity to address Tribal concerns about the impacts of illegal activities, such as illegal fishing and hunting, dumping of trash, and vandalism, which destroy natural and cultural resources and impact protected Tribal rights. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has submitted a Decision

Package for 20 more enforcement officers and six support staff to provide a proactive presence, crime deterrence, and greater natural resource protection statewide.

Proposal: The EJ Council endorses DFW's "Expanding Fish and Wildlife Police" Decision Package for \$17,281,000.