

RCW 70A.45.090 Forests and forest products sector—Climate response. (1)(a) Washington's existing forest products sector, including public and private working forests and the harvesting, transportation, and manufacturing sectors that enable working forests to remain on the land and the state to be a global supplier of forest products, is, according to a University of Washington study analyzing the global warming mitigating role of wood products from Washington's private forests, an industrial sector that currently operates as a significant net sequesterer of carbon. This value, which is only provided through the maintenance of an intact and synergistic industrial sector, is an integral component of the state's contribution to the global climate response and efforts to mitigate carbon emissions.

(b) Satisfying the goals set forth in RCW 70A.45.020 requires supporting, throughout all of state government, consistent with other laws and mandates of the state, the economic vitality of the sustainable forest products sector and other business sectors capable of sequestering and storing carbon. This includes support for working forests of all sizes, ownerships, and management objectives, and the necessary manufacturing sectors that support the transformation of stored carbon into long-lived forest products while maintaining and enhancing the carbon mitigation benefits of the forest sector, sustaining rural communities, and providing for fish, wildlife, and clean water, as provided in chapter 76.09 RCW. Support for the forest sector also ensures the state's public and private working forests avoid catastrophic wildfire and other similar disturbances and avoid conversion in the face of unprecedented conversion pressures.

(c) It is the policy of the state to support the contributions of all working forests and the synergistic forest products sector to the state's climate response. This includes landowners, mills, bioenergy, pulp and paper, and the related harvesting and transportation infrastructure that is necessary for forestland owners to continue the rotational cycle of carbon capture and sequestration in growing trees and allows forest products manufacturers to store the captured carbon in wood products and maintain and enhance the forest sector's role in mitigating a significant percentage of the state's carbon emissions while providing other environmental and social benefits and supporting a strong rural economic base. It is further the policy of the state to support the participation of working forests in current and future carbon markets, strengthening the state's role as a valuable contributor to the global carbon response while supporting one of its largest manufacturing sectors.

(d) It is further the policy of the state to utilize carbon accounting land use, land use change, and forestry reporting principles consistent with established reporting guidelines, such as those used by the intergovernmental panel on climate change and the United States national greenhouse gas reporting inventories.

(2) Any state carbon programs must support the policies stated in this section and recognize the forest products industry's contribution to the state's climate response. [2021 c 65 s 70; 2020 c 120 s 3.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.

Findings—2020 c 120: See note following RCW 70A.45.005.