

Chapter 43.21c RCW

State environmental policy

[Chapter Listing](#)

RCW Sections

- [43.21C.010](#) Purposes.
- [43.21C.020](#) Legislative recognitions -- Declaration -- Responsibility.
- [43.21C.030](#) Guidelines for state agencies, local governments -- Statements -- Reports -- Advice -- Information.
- [43.21C.031](#) Significant impacts.
- [43.21C.033](#) Threshold determination to be made within ninety days after application is complete.
- [43.21C.034](#) Use of existing documents.
- [43.21C.035](#) Certain irrigation projects decisions exempt from RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#).
- [43.21C.036](#) Hazardous substance remedial actions -- Procedural requirements and documents to be integrated.
- [43.21C.037](#) Application of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) to forest practices.
- [43.21C.038](#) Application of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) to school closures.
- [43.21C.0381](#) Application of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) to decisions pertaining to air operating permits.
- [43.21C.0382](#) Application of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) to watershed restoration projects -- Fish habitat enhancement projects.
- [43.21C.0383](#) Application of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) to waste discharge permits.
- [43.21C.0384](#) Application of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) to personal wireless services facilities.
- [43.21C.039](#) Metals mining and milling operations -- Environmental impact statements required.
- [43.21C.040](#) Examination of laws, regulations, policies by state agencies and local authorities -- Report of deficiencies and corrective measures.
- [43.21C.050](#) Specific statutory obligations not affected.
- [43.21C.060](#) Chapter supplementary -- Conditioning or denial of governmental action.
- [43.21C.065](#) Impact fees and fees for system improvements.
- [43.21C.075](#) Appeals.
- [43.21C.080](#) Notice of action by governmental agency -- How publicized -- Time limitation for commencing challenge to action.
- [43.21C.087](#) List of filings required by RCW [43.21C.080](#).
- [43.21C.090](#) Decision of governmental agency to be accorded substantial weight.
- [43.21C.095](#) State environmental policy act rules to be accorded substantial deference.
- [43.21C.110](#) Content of state environmental policy act rules.
- [43.21C.120](#) Rules, ordinances, resolutions and regulations -- Adoption -- Effective dates.
- [43.21C.130](#) Model ordinances.
- [43.21C.135](#) Authority of local governmental units to adopt rules, guidelines and model ordinances by reference.
- [43.21C.150](#) RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) inapplicable when statement previously prepared pursuant to national environmental policy act.
- [43.21C.160](#) Utilization of statement prepared under RCW [43.21C.030](#) to implement chapter 90.62 RCW -- Utilization of chapter 90.62 RCW procedures to satisfy RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#).
- [43.21C.165](#) Challenges to consistency of rules adopted pursuant to RCW [43.21C.110](#) and [43.21C.160](#) -- Procedure -- Finality.
- [43.21C.170](#) Council on environmental policy.
- [43.21C.175](#) Council on environmental policy -- Personnel.
- [43.21C.210](#) Certain actions during state of emergency exempt from chapter.
- [43.21C.220](#) Incorporation of city or town exempt from chapter.
- [43.21C.222](#) Annexation by city or town exempt from chapter.
- [43.21C.225](#) Consolidation and annexation of cities and towns exempt from chapter.
- [43.21C.227](#) Disincorporation of a city or town or reduction of city or town limits exempt from chapter.

- [43.21C.229](#) Infill development -- Categorical exemptions from chapter.
- [43.21C.230](#) Development and adoption of plan under chapter 43.180 RCW exempt from chapter.
- [43.21C.232](#) Infrastructure improvements necessary to implement renewable fuel standards -- Application and decision processing.
- [43.21C.240](#) Project review under the growth management act.
- [43.21C.250](#) Forest practices board -- Emergency rules -- Exempt from chapter.
- [43.21C.260](#) Certain actions not subject to RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) -- Threshold determination on a watershed analysis.
- [43.21C.270](#) Certain secure community transition facilities not subject to this chapter.
- [43.21C.300](#) Workshops -- Handbook.
- [43.21C.400](#) Unfinished nuclear power projects -- Council action exempt from this chapter.
- [43.21C.900](#) Short title.
- [43.21C.910](#) Severability -- 1974 ex.s. c 179.
- [43.21C.911](#) Section headings not part of law -- 1983 c 117.
- [43.21C.912](#) Applicability -- 1983 c 117.
- [43.21C.913](#) Severability -- 1983 c 117.
- [43.21C.914](#) Effective dates -- 1983 c 117.

Notes:

Economic policy: Chapter 43.21H RCW.

43.21C.010**Purposes.**

The purposes of this chapter are: (1) To declare a state policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; (2) to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere; (3) and stimulate the health and welfare of man; and (4) to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the state and nation.

[1971 ex.s. c 109 § 1.]

43.21C.020**Legislative recognitions — Declaration — Responsibility.**

(1) The legislature, recognizing that man depends on his biological and physical surroundings for food, shelter, and other needs, and for cultural enrichment as well; and recognizing further the profound impact of man's activity on the interrelations of all components of the natural environment, particularly the profound influences of population growth, high-density urbanization, industrial expansion, resource utilization and exploitation, and new and expanding technological advances and recognizing further the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to the overall welfare and development of man, declares that it is the continuing policy of the state of Washington, in cooperation with federal and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to: (a) Foster and promote the general welfare; (b) to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony; and (c) fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Washington citizens.

(2) In order to carry out the policy set forth in this chapter, it is the continuing responsibility of the state of Washington and all agencies of the state to use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of state policy, to improve and coordinate plans, functions, programs, and resources to the end that the state and its citizens may:

- (a) Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
- (b) Assure for all people of Washington safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
- (c) Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;

- (d) Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage;
 - (e) Maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
 - (f) Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
 - (g) Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.
- (3) The legislature recognizes that each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment and that each person has a responsibility to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment.

[1971 ex.s. c 109 § 2.]

43.21C.030

Guidelines for state agencies, local governments — Statements — Reports — Advice — Information.

The legislature authorizes and directs that, to the fullest extent possible: (1) The policies, regulations, and laws of the state of Washington shall be interpreted and administered in accordance with the policies set forth in this chapter, and (2) all branches of government of this state, including state agencies, municipal and public corporations, and counties shall:

- (a) Utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decision making which may have an impact on man's environment;
- (b) Identify and develop methods and procedures, in consultation with the department of ecology and the ecological commission, which will insure that presently unquantified environmental amenities and values will be given appropriate consideration in decision making along with economic and technical considerations;
- (c) Include in every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major actions significantly affecting the quality of the environment, a detailed statement by the responsible official on:
 - (i) the environmental impact of the proposed action;
 - (ii) any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented;
 - (iii) alternatives to the proposed action;
 - (iv) the relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity; and
 - (v) any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented;
- (d) Prior to making any detailed statement, the responsible official shall consult with and obtain the comments of any public agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved. Copies of such statement and the comments and views of the appropriate federal, province, state, and local agencies, which are authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards, shall be made available to the governor, the department of ecology, the ecological commission, and the public, and shall accompany the proposal through the existing agency review processes;
- (e) Study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources;
- (f) Recognize the world-wide and long-range character of environmental problems and, where consistent with state policy, lend appropriate support to initiatives, resolutions, and programs designed to maximize international cooperation in anticipating and preventing a decline in the quality of mankind's world environment;
- (g) Make available to the federal government, other states, provinces of Canada, municipalities, institutions, and individuals, advice and information useful in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of the environment;
- (h) Initiate and utilize ecological information in the planning and development of natural resource-oriented projects.

[1971 ex.s. c 109 § 3.]

43.21C.031**Significant impacts.**

(1) An environmental impact statement (the detailed statement required by RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)) shall be prepared on proposals for legislation and other major actions having a probable significant, adverse environmental impact. The environmental impact statement may be combined with the recommendation or report on the proposal or issued as a separate document. The substantive decisions or recommendations shall be clearly identifiable in the combined document. Actions categorically exempt under RCW 43.21C.110(1)(a) do not require environmental review or the preparation of an environmental impact statement under this chapter. In a county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040, a planned action, as provided for in subsection (2) of this section, does not require a threshold determination or the preparation of an environmental impact statement under this chapter, but is subject to environmental review and mitigation as provided in this chapter.

An environmental impact statement is required to analyze only those probable adverse environmental impacts which are significant. Beneficial environmental impacts may be discussed. The responsible official shall consult with agencies and the public to identify such impacts and limit the scope of an environmental impact statement. The subjects listed in RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) need not be treated as separate sections of an environmental impact statement. Discussions of significant short-term and long-term environmental impacts, significant irrevocable commitments of natural resources, significant alternatives including mitigation measures, and significant environmental impacts which cannot be mitigated should be consolidated or included, as applicable, in those sections of an environmental impact statement where the responsible official decides they logically belong.

(2)(a) For purposes of this section, a planned action means one or more types of project action that:

(i) Are designated planned actions by an ordinance or resolution adopted by a county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040;

(ii) Have had the significant impacts adequately addressed in an environmental impact statement prepared in conjunction with (A) a comprehensive plan or subarea plan adopted under chapter 36.70A RCW, or (B) a fully contained community, a master planned resort, a master planned development, or a phased project;

(iii) Are subsequent or implementing projects for the proposals listed in (a)(ii) of this subsection;

(iv) Are located within an urban growth area, as defined in RCW 36.70A.030;

(v) Are not essential public facilities, as defined in RCW 36.70A.200; and

(vi) Are consistent with a comprehensive plan adopted under chapter 36.70A RCW.

(b) A county, city, or town shall limit planned actions to certain types of development or to specific geographical areas that are less extensive than the jurisdictional boundaries of the county, city, or town and may limit a planned action to a time period identified in the environmental impact statement or the ordinance or resolution adopted under this subsection.

[1995 c 347 § 203; 1983 c 117 § 1.]

Notes:

Finding -- Severability -- Part headings and table of contents not law -- 1995 c 347: See notes following RCW 36.70A.470.

43.21C.033**Threshold determination to be made within ninety days after application is complete.**

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the responsible official shall make a threshold determination on a completed application within ninety days after the application and supporting documentation are complete. The applicant may request an additional thirty days for the threshold determination. The governmental entity responsible for making the threshold determination shall by rule, resolution, or ordinance adopt standards, consistent with rules adopted by the department to implement this chapter, for determining when an application and supporting documentation are complete.

(2) This section shall not apply to a city, town, or county that:

(a) By ordinance adopted prior to April 1, 1992, has adopted procedures to integrate permit and land use decisions with the requirements of this chapter; or

(b) Is planning under RCW 36.70A.040 and is subject to the requirements of *RCW 36.70B.090.

[1995 c 347 § 422; 1992 c 208 § 1.]

Notes:

***Reviser's note:** RCW 36.70B.090 expired June 30, 2000, pursuant to 1998 c 286 § 8.

Finding -- Severability -- Part headings and table of contents not law -- 1995 c 347: See notes following RCW 36.70A.470.

Effective date -- 1992 c 208 § 1: "Section 1 of this act shall take effect September 1, 1992." [1992 c 208 § 2.]

43.21C.034**Use of existing documents.**

Lead agencies are authorized to use in whole or in part existing environmental documents for new project or nonproject actions, if the documents adequately address environmental considerations set forth in RCW [43.21C.030](#). The prior proposal or action and the new proposal or action need not be identical, but must have similar elements that provide a basis for comparing their environmental consequences such as timing, types of impacts, alternatives, or geography. The lead agency shall independently review the content of the existing documents and determine that the information and analysis to be used is relevant and adequate. If necessary, the lead agency may require additional documentation to ensure that all environmental impacts have been adequately addressed.

[1993 c 23 § 1.]

43.21C.035**Certain irrigation projects decisions exempt from RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).**

Decisions pertaining to applications for appropriation of fifty cubic feet of water per second or less for irrigation projects promulgated by any person, private firm, private corporation or private association without resort to subsidy by either state or federal government pursuant to RCW 90.03.250 through 90.03.340, as now or hereafter amended, to be used for agricultural irrigation shall not be subject to the requirements of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#), as now or hereafter amended.

[1974 ex.s. c 150 § 1.]

43.21C.036**Hazardous substance remedial actions — Procedural requirements and documents to be integrated.**

In conducting a remedial action at a facility pursuant to a consent decree, order, or agreed order issued pursuant to chapter 70.105D RCW, or if conducted by the department of ecology, the department of ecology to the maximum extent practicable shall integrate the procedural requirements and documents of this chapter with the procedures and documents under chapter 70.105D RCW. Such integration shall at a minimum include the public participation procedures of chapter 70.105D RCW and the public notice and review requirements of this chapter.

[1994 c 257 § 21.]

Notes:

Severability -- 1994 c 257: See note following RCW 36.70A.270.

43.21C.037**Application of RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) to forest practices.**

(1) Decisions pertaining to applications for Class I, II, and III forest practices, as defined by rule of the forest practices board under RCW 76.09.050, are not subject to the requirements of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) as now or hereafter amended.

(2) When the applicable county, city, or town requires a license in connection with any proposal involving forest practices (a) on

lands platted after January 1, 1960, as provided in chapter 58.17 RCW, (b) on lands that have or are being converted to another use, or (c) on lands which, pursuant to RCW 76.09.070 as now or hereafter amended, are not to be reforested because of the likelihood of future conversion to urban development, then the local government, rather than the department of natural resources, is responsible for any detailed statement required under RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#).

(3) Those forest practices determined by rule of the forest practices board to have a potential for a substantial impact on the environment, and thus to be Class IV practices, require an evaluation by the department of natural resources as to whether or not a detailed statement must be prepared pursuant to this chapter. The evaluation shall be made within ten days from the date the department receives the application. A Class IV forest practice application must be approved or disapproved by the department within thirty calendar days from the date the department receives the application, unless the department determines that a detailed statement must be made, in which case the application must be approved or disapproved by the department within sixty days from the date the department receives the application, unless the commissioner of public lands, through the promulgation of a formal order, determines that the process cannot be completed within such period. This section shall not be construed to prevent any local or regional governmental entity from determining that a detailed statement must be prepared for an action regarding a Class IV forest practice taken by that governmental entity concerning the land on which forest practices will be conducted.

[1997 c 173 § 6; 1983 c 117 § 2; 1981 c 290 § 1.]

43.21C.038

Application of RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) to school closures.

Nothing in RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#) shall be construed to require the preparation of an environmental impact statement or the making of a threshold determination for any decision or any action commenced subsequent to September 1, 1982, pertaining to a plan, program, or decision for the closure of a school or schools or for the school closure portion of any broader policy, plan or program by a school district board of directors.

[1983 c 109 § 1.]

43.21C.0381

Application of RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) to decisions pertaining to air operating permits.

Decisions pertaining to the issuance, renewal, reopening, or revision of an air operating permit under RCW 70.94.161 are not subject to the requirements of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#).

[1995 c 172 § 1.]

43.21C.0382

Application of RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) to watershed restoration projects — Fish habitat enhancement projects.

Decisions pertaining to watershed restoration projects as defined in RCW 89.08.460 are not subject to the requirements of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#). Decisions pertaining to fish habitat enhancement projects meeting the criteria of *RCW 77.55.290(1) and being reviewed and approved according to the provisions of *RCW 77.55.290 are not subject to the requirements of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#).

[2003 c 39 § 23; 1998 c 249 § 12; 1995 c 378 § 12.]

Notes:

***Reviser's note:** RCW 77.55.290 was recodified as RCW 77.55.181 pursuant to 2005 c 146 § 1001.

Findings -- Purpose -- Report -- Effective date -- 1998 c 249: See notes following RCW 77.55.181.

43.21C.0383**Application of RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) to waste discharge permits.**

*** CHANGE IN 2008 *** (SEE 6504.SL) ***

The issuance, reissuance, or modification of a waste discharge permit that contains conditions no less stringent than federal effluent limitations and state rules is not subject to the requirements of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#). This exemption applies to existing discharges only and does not apply to new source discharges.

[1996 c 322 § 1.]

43.21C.0384**Application of RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) to personal wireless services facilities.**

(1) Decisions pertaining to applications to site personal wireless service facilities are not subject to the requirements of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#), if those facilities meet the following requirements:

(a)(i) The facility to be sited is a microcell and is to be attached to an existing structure that is not a residence or school and does not contain a residence or a school; or (ii) the facility includes personal wireless service antennas, other than a microcell, and is to be attached to an existing structure (that may be an existing tower) that is not a residence or school and does not contain a residence or a school, and the existing structure to which it is to be attached is located in a commercial, industrial, manufacturing, forest, or agricultural zone; or (iii) the siting project involves constructing a personal wireless service tower less than sixty feet in height that is located in a commercial, industrial, manufacturing, forest, or agricultural zone; and

(b) The project is not in a designated environmentally sensitive area; and

(c) The project does not consist of a series of actions: (i) Some of which are not categorically exempt; or (ii) that together may have a probable significant adverse environmental impact.

(2) The department of ecology shall adopt rules to create a categorical exemption for microcells and other personal wireless service facilities that meet the conditions set forth in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Personal wireless services" means commercial mobile services, unlicensed wireless services, and common carrier wireless exchange access services, as defined by federal laws and regulations.

(b) "Personal wireless service facilities" means facilities for the provision of personal wireless services.

(c) "Microcell" means a wireless communication facility consisting of an antenna that is either: (i) Four feet in height and with an area of not more than five hundred eighty square inches; or (ii) if a tubular antenna, no more than four inches in diameter and no more than six feet in length.

[1996 c 323 § 2.]

Notes:

Findings -- 1996 c 323: See note following RCW 43.70.600.

43.21C.039**Metals mining and milling operations — Environmental impact statements required.**

Notwithstanding any provision in RCW [43.21C.030](#) and [43.21C.031](#) to the contrary, an environmental impact statement shall be prepared for any proposed metals mining and milling operation as required by RCW 78.56.050.

[1994 c 232 § 25.]

Notes:

Severability -- 1994 c 232: See RCW 78.56.900.

Effective date -- 1994 c 232 §§ 1-5, 9-17, and 23-31: See RCW 78.56.901.

Disclosures required with SEPA checklist, metals mining and milling operations: RCW 78.56.040.

43.21C.040

Examination of laws, regulations, policies by state agencies and local authorities — Report of deficiencies and corrective measures.

All branches of government of this state, including state agencies, municipal and public corporations, and counties shall review their present statutory authority, administrative regulations, and current policies and procedures for the purpose of determining whether there are any deficiencies or inconsistencies therein which prohibit full compliance with the purposes and provisions of this chapter and shall propose to the governor not later than January 1, 1972, such measures as may be necessary to bring their authority and policies in conformity with the intent, purposes, and procedures set forth in this chapter.

[1971 ex.s. c 109 § 4.]

43.21C.050

Specific statutory obligations not affected.

Nothing in RCW [43.21C.030](#) or [43.21C.040](#) shall in any way affect the specific statutory obligations of any agency (1) to comply with criteria or standards of environmental quality, (2) to coordinate or consult with any other public agency, or (3) to act, or refrain from acting contingent upon the recommendations or certification of any other public agency.

[1971 ex.s. c 109 § 5.]

43.21C.060

Chapter supplementary — Conditioning or denial of governmental action.

The policies and goals set forth in this chapter are supplementary to those set forth in existing authorizations of all branches of government of this state, including state agencies, municipal and public corporations, and counties. Any governmental action may be conditioned or denied pursuant to this chapter: PROVIDED, That such conditions or denials shall be based upon policies identified by the appropriate governmental authority and incorporated into regulations, plans, or codes which are formally designated by the agency (or appropriate legislative body, in the case of local government) as possible bases for the exercise of authority pursuant to this chapter. Such designation shall occur at the time specified by RCW [43.21C.120](#). Such action may be conditioned only to mitigate specific adverse environmental impacts which are identified in the environmental documents prepared under this chapter. These conditions shall be stated in writing by the decisionmaker. Mitigation measures shall be reasonable and capable of being accomplished. In order to deny a proposal under this chapter, an agency must find that: (1) The proposal would result in significant adverse impacts identified in a final or supplemental environmental impact statement prepared under this chapter; and (2) reasonable mitigation measures are insufficient to mitigate the identified impact. Except for permits and variances issued pursuant to chapter 90.58 RCW, when such a governmental action, not requiring a legislative decision, is conditioned or denied by a nonelected official of a local governmental agency, the decision shall be appealable to the legislative authority of the acting local governmental agency unless that legislative authority formally eliminates such appeals. Such appeals shall be in accordance with procedures established for such appeals by the legislative authority of the acting local governmental agency.

[1983 c 117 § 3; 1977 ex.s. c 278 § 2; 1971 ex.s. c 109 § 6.]

43.21C.065

Impact fees and fees for system improvements.

A person required to pay an impact fee for system improvements pursuant to RCW 82.02.050 through 82.02.090 shall not be required to pay a fee pursuant to RCW [43.21C.060](#) for those same system improvements.

[1992 c 219 § 1.]

43.21C.075

Appeals.

(1) Because a major purpose of this chapter is to combine environmental considerations with public decisions, any appeal brought under this chapter shall be linked to a specific governmental action. The State Environmental Policy Act provides a basis for challenging whether governmental action is in compliance with the substantive and procedural provisions of this chapter. The State Environmental Policy Act is not intended to create a cause of action unrelated to a specific governmental action.

(2) Unless otherwise provided by this section:

(a) Appeals under this chapter shall be of the governmental action together with its accompanying environmental determinations.

(b) Appeals of environmental determinations made (or lacking) under this chapter shall be commenced within the time required to appeal the governmental action which is subject to environmental review.

(3) If an agency has a procedure for appeals of agency environmental determinations made under this chapter, such procedure:

(a) Shall allow no more than one agency appeal proceeding on each procedural determination (the adequacy of a determination of significance/nonsignificance or of a final environmental impact statement);

(b) Shall consolidate an appeal of procedural issues and of substantive determinations made under this chapter (such as a decision to require particular mitigation measures or to deny a proposal) with a hearing or appeal on the underlying governmental action by providing for a single simultaneous hearing before one hearing officer or body to consider the agency decision or recommendation on a proposal and any environmental determinations made under this chapter, with the exception of:

(i) An appeal of a determination of significance;

(ii) An appeal of a procedural determination made by an agency when the agency is a project proponent, or is funding a project, and chooses to conduct its review under this chapter, including any appeals of its procedural determinations, prior to submitting an application for a project permit;

(iii) An appeal of a procedural determination made by an agency on a nonproject action; or

(iv) An appeal to the local legislative authority under RCW [43.21C.060](#) or other applicable state statutes;

(c) Shall provide for the preparation of a record for use in any subsequent appeal proceedings, and shall provide for any subsequent appeal proceedings to be conducted on the record, consistent with other applicable law. An adequate record consists of findings and conclusions, testimony under oath, and taped or written transcript. An electronically recorded transcript will suffice for purposes of review under this subsection; and

(d) Shall provide that procedural determinations made by the responsible official shall be entitled to substantial weight.

(4) If a person aggrieved by an agency action has the right to judicial appeal and if an agency has an administrative appeal procedure, such person shall, prior to seeking any judicial review, use such agency procedure if any such procedure is available, unless expressly provided otherwise by state statute.

(5) Some statutes and ordinances contain time periods for challenging governmental actions which are subject to review under this chapter, such as various local land use approvals (the "underlying governmental action"). RCW [43.21C.080](#) establishes an optional "notice of action" procedure which, if used, imposes a time period for appealing decisions under this chapter. This subsection does not modify any such time periods. In this subsection, the term "appeal" refers to a judicial appeal only.

(a) If there is a time period for appealing the underlying governmental action, appeals under this chapter shall be commenced within such time period. The agency shall give official notice stating the date and place for commencing an appeal.

(b) If there is no time period for appealing the underlying governmental action, and a notice of action under RCW [43.21C.080](#) is used, appeals shall be commenced within the time period specified by RCW [43.21C.080](#).

(6)(a) Judicial review under subsection (5) of this section of an appeal decision made by an agency under subsection (3) of this section shall be on the record, consistent with other applicable law.

(b) A taped or written transcript may be used. If a taped transcript is to be reviewed, a record shall identify the location on the taped transcript of testimony and evidence to be reviewed. Parties are encouraged to designate only those portions of the testimony necessary to present the issues raised on review, but if a party alleges that a finding of fact is not supported by evidence, the party should include in the record all evidence relevant to the disputed finding. Any other party may designate additional portions of the taped transcript relating to issues raised on review. A party may provide a written transcript of portions of the testimony at the party's own expense or apply to that court for an order requiring the party seeking review to pay for additional portions of the written transcript.

(c) Judicial review under this chapter shall without exception be of the governmental action together with its accompanying environmental determinations.

(7) Jurisdiction over the review of determinations under this chapter in an appeal before an agency or superior court shall upon consent of the parties be transferred in whole or part to the shorelines hearings board. The shorelines hearings board shall hear the matter and sign the final order expeditiously. The superior court shall certify the final order of the shorelines hearings board and the certified final order may only be appealed to an appellate court. In the case of an appeal under this chapter regarding a project or other matter that is also the subject of an appeal to the shorelines hearings board under chapter 90.58 RCW, the shorelines hearings board shall have sole jurisdiction over both the appeal under this section and the appeal under chapter 90.58 RCW, shall consider them together, and shall issue a final order within one hundred eighty days as provided in RCW 90.58.180.

(8) For purposes of this section and RCW [43.21C.080](#), the words "action", "decision", and "determination" mean substantive agency action including any accompanying procedural determinations under this chapter (except where the word "action" means "appeal" in RCW [43.21C.080\(2\)](#)). The word "action" in this section and RCW [43.21C.080](#) does not mean a procedural determination by itself made under this chapter. The word "determination" includes any environmental document required by this chapter and state or local implementing rules. The word "agency" refers to any state or local unit of government. Except as provided in subsection (5) of this section, the word "appeal" refers to administrative, legislative, or judicial appeals.

(9) The court in its discretion may award reasonable attorneys' fees of up to one thousand dollars in the aggregate to the prevailing party, including a governmental agency, on issues arising out of this chapter if the court makes specific findings that the legal position of a party is frivolous and without reasonable basis.

[1997 c 429 § 49; 1995 c 347 § 204; 1994 c 253 § 4; 1983 c 117 § 4.]

Notes:

Severability -- 1997 c 429: See note following RCW 36.70A.3201.

Finding -- Severability -- Part headings and table of contents not law -- 1995 c 347: See notes following RCW 36.70A.470.

43.21C.080

Notice of action by governmental agency — How publicized — Time limitation for commencing challenge to action.

(1) Notice of any action taken by a governmental agency may be publicized by the acting governmental agency, the applicant for, or the proponent of such action, in substantially the form as set forth in rules adopted under RCW [43.21C.110](#):

(a) By publishing notice on the same day of each week for two consecutive weeks in a legal newspaper of general circulation in the area where the property which is the subject of the action is located;

(b) By filing notice of such action with the department of ecology at its main office in Olympia prior to the date of the last newspaper publication; and

(c) Except for those actions which are of a nonproject nature, by one of the following methods which shall be accomplished prior to the date of first newspaper publication;

(i) Mailing to the latest recorded real property owners, as shown by the records of the county treasurer, who share a common boundary line with the property upon which the project is proposed through United States mail, first class, postage prepaid.

(ii) Posting of the notice in a conspicuous manner on the property upon which the project is to be constructed.

(2)(a) Except as otherwise provided in RCW [43.21C.075\(5\)\(a\)](#), any action to set aside, enjoin, review, or otherwise challenge any such governmental action or subsequent governmental action for which notice is given as provided in subsection (1) of this section on grounds of noncompliance with the provisions of this chapter shall be commenced within twenty-one days from the date of last newspaper publication of the notice pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, or be barred.

(b) Any subsequent governmental action on the proposal for which notice has been given as provided in subsection (1) of this section shall not be set aside, enjoined, reviewed, or otherwise challenged on grounds of noncompliance with the provisions of RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(a\)](#) through (h) unless there has been a substantial change in the proposal between the time of the first governmental action and the subsequent governmental action that is likely to have adverse environmental impacts beyond the range of impacts

previously analyzed, or unless the action now being considered was identified in an earlier detailed statement or declaration of nonsignificance as being one which would require further environmental evaluation.

[1995 c 347 § 205; 1977 ex.s. c 278 § 1; 1974 ex.s. c 179 § 2; 1973 1st ex.s. c 179 § 2.]

Notes:

Finding -- Severability -- Part headings and table of contents not law -- 1995 c 347: See notes following RCW 36.70A.470.

Purpose -- 1974 ex.s. c 179: "The purpose of this 1974 amendatory act is to establish methods and means of providing for full implementation of chapter 43.21C RCW (the state environmental policy act of 1971) in a manner which reduces duplicative and wasteful practices, establishes effective and uniform procedures, encourages public involvement, and promotes certainty with respect to the requirements of the act." [1974 ex.s. c 179 § 1.]

Effective date -- 1973 1st ex.s. c 179: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions and shall take effect on July 1, 1973: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That prior thereto, the department of ecology may take such actions, including the issuing of notices and the conduct of public hearing, as are necessary to insure the implementation of section 1 of this act." [1973 1st ex.s. c 179 § 4.]

43.21C.087

List of filings required by RCW 43.21C.080.

The department of ecology shall prepare a list of all filings required by RCW [43.21C.080](#) each week and shall make such list available to any interested party. The list of filings shall include a brief description of the governmental action and the project involved in such action, along with the location of where information on the project or action may be obtained. Failure of the department to include any project or action shall not affect the running of the statute of limitations provided in RCW [43.21C.080](#).

[1974 ex.s. c 179 § 14.]

Notes:

Purpose -- 1974 ex.s. c 179: See note following RCW [43.21C.080](#).

43.21C.090

Decision of governmental agency to be accorded substantial weight.

In any action involving an attack on a determination by a governmental agency relative to the requirement or the absence of the requirement, or the adequacy of a "detailed statement", the decision of the governmental agency shall be accorded substantial weight.

[1973 1st ex.s. c 179 § 3.]

Notes:

Effective date -- 1973 1st ex.s. c 179: See note following RCW [43.21C.080](#).

43.21C.095

State environmental policy act rules to be accorded substantial deference.

The rules promulgated under RCW [43.21C.110](#) shall be accorded substantial deference in the interpretation of this chapter.

[1983 c 117 § 5.]

43.21C.110

Content of state environmental policy act rules.

It shall be the duty and function of the department of ecology:

(1) To adopt and amend thereafter rules of interpretation and implementation of this chapter, subject to the requirements of chapter 34.05 RCW, for the purpose of providing uniform rules and guidelines to all branches of government including state agencies, political subdivisions, public and municipal corporations, and counties. The proposed rules shall be subject to full public hearings requirements associated with rule promulgation. Suggestions for modifications of the proposed rules shall be considered on their merits, and the department shall have the authority and responsibility for full and appropriate independent promulgation and adoption of rules, assuring consistency with this chapter as amended and with the preservation of protections afforded by this chapter. The rule-making powers authorized in this section shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following phases of interpretation and implementation of this chapter:

(a) Categories of governmental actions which are not to be considered as potential major actions significantly affecting the quality of the environment, including categories pertaining to applications for water right permits pursuant to chapters 90.03 and 90.44 RCW. The types of actions included as categorical exemptions in the rules shall be limited to those types which are not major actions significantly affecting the quality of the environment. The rules shall provide for certain circumstances where actions which potentially are categorically exempt require environmental review. An action that is categorically exempt under the rules adopted by the department may not be conditioned or denied under this chapter.

(b) Rules for criteria and procedures applicable to the determination of when an act of a branch of government is a major action significantly affecting the quality of the environment for which a detailed statement is required to be prepared pursuant to RCW [43.21C.030](#).

(c) Rules and procedures applicable to the preparation of detailed statements and other environmental documents, including but not limited to rules for timing of environmental review, obtaining comments, data and other information, and providing for and determining areas of public participation which shall include the scope and review of draft environmental impact statements.

(d) Scope of coverage and contents of detailed statements assuring that such statements are simple, uniform, and as short as practicable; statements are required to analyze only reasonable alternatives and probable adverse environmental impacts which are significant, and may analyze beneficial impacts.

(e) Rules and procedures for public notification of actions taken and documents prepared.

(f) Definition of terms relevant to the implementation of this chapter including the establishment of a list of elements of the environment. Analysis of environmental considerations under RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)](#) may be required only for those subjects listed as elements of the environment (or portions thereof). The list of elements of the environment shall consist of the "natural" and "built" environment. The elements of the built environment shall consist of public services and utilities (such as water, sewer, schools, fire and police protection), transportation, environmental health (such as explosive materials and toxic waste), and land and shoreline use (including housing, and a description of the relationships with land use and shoreline plans and designations, including population).

(g) Rules for determining the obligations and powers under this chapter of two or more branches of government involved in the same project significantly affecting the quality of the environment.

(h) Methods to assure adequate public awareness of the preparation and issuance of detailed statements required by RCW [43.21C.030\(2\)\(c\)](#).

(i) To prepare rules for projects setting forth the time limits within which the governmental entity responsible for the action shall comply with the provisions of this chapter.

(j) Rules for utilization of a detailed statement for more than one action and rules improving environmental analysis of nonproject proposals and encouraging better interagency coordination and integration between this chapter and other environmental laws.

(k) Rules relating to actions which shall be exempt from the provisions of this chapter in situations of emergency.

(l) Rules relating to the use of environmental documents in planning and decision making and the implementation of the substantive policies and requirements of this chapter, including procedures for appeals under this chapter.

(m) Rules and procedures that provide for the integration of environmental review with project review as provided in RCW [43.21C.240](#). The rules and procedures shall be jointly developed with the department of community, trade, and economic development and shall be applicable to the preparation of environmental documents for actions in counties, cities, and towns planning under RCW 36.70A.040. The rules and procedures shall also include procedures and criteria to analyze planned actions under RCW [43.21C.031\(2\)](#) and revisions to the rules adopted under this section to ensure that they are compatible with the requirements and authorizations of chapter 347, Laws of 1995, as amended by chapter 429, Laws of 1997. Ordinances or procedures adopted by a county, city, or town to implement the provisions of chapter 347, Laws of 1995 prior to the effective date of rules adopted under this subsection (1)(m) shall continue to be effective until the adoption of any new or revised ordinances or procedures that may be required. If any revisions are required as a result of rules adopted under this subsection (1)(m), those revisions shall be made within the time limits specified in RCW [43.21C.120](#).

(2) In exercising its powers, functions, and duties under this section, the department may:

(a) Consult with the state agencies and with representatives of science, industry, agriculture, labor, conservation organizations, state and local governments, and other groups, as it deems advisable; and

(b) Utilize, to the fullest extent possible, the services, facilities, and information (including statistical information) of public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals, in order to avoid duplication of effort and expense, overlap, or conflict with similar activities authorized by law and performed by established agencies.

(3) Rules adopted pursuant to this section shall be subject to the review procedures of chapter 34.05 RCW.

[1997 c 429 § 47; 1995 c 347 § 206; 1983 c 117 § 7; 1974 ex.s. c 179 § 6.]

Notes:

Severability -- 1997 c 429: See note following RCW 36.70A.3201.

Finding -- Severability -- Part headings and table of contents not law -- 1995 c 347: See notes following RCW 36.70A.470.

Purpose -- 1974 ex.s. c 179: See note following RCW [43.21C.080](#).

43.21C.120

Rules, ordinances, resolutions and regulations — Adoption — Effective dates.

(1) All agencies of government of this state are directed, consistent with rules and guidelines adopted under RCW [43.21C.110](#), including any revisions, to adopt rules pertaining to the integration of the policies and procedures of this chapter (the state environmental policy act of 1971), into the various programs under their jurisdiction for implementation. Designation of policies [policies] under RCW [43.21C.060](#) and adoption of rules required under this section shall take place not later than one hundred eighty days after the effective date of rules and guidelines adopted pursuant to RCW [43.21C.110](#), or after the establishment of an agency, whichever shall occur later.

(2) Rules adopted by state agencies under subsection (1) of this section shall be adopted in accordance with the provisions of chapter 34.05 RCW and shall be subject to the review procedures of RCW *34.05.538 and 34.05.240.

(3) All public and municipal corporations, political subdivisions, and counties of this state are directed, consistent with rules and guidelines adopted under RCW [43.21C.110](#), including any revisions, to adopt rules, ordinances, or resolutions pertaining to the integration of the policies and procedures of this chapter (the state environmental policy act of 1971), into the various programs under their jurisdiction for implementation. Designation of policies under RCW [43.21C.060](#) and adoption of the rules required under this section shall take place not later than one hundred eighty days after the effective date of rules and guidelines adopted pursuant to RCW [43.21C.110](#), or after the establishment of the governmental entity, whichever shall occur later.

(4) Ordinances or regulations adopted prior to the effective date of rules and guidelines adopted pursuant to RCW [43.21C.110](#) shall continue to be effective until the adoptions of any new or revised ordinances or regulations which may be required: PROVIDED, That revisions required by this section as a result of rule changes under RCW [43.21C.110](#) are made within the time limits specified by this section.

[1983 c 117 § 8; 1974 ex.s. c 179 § 8.]

Notes:

***Reviser's note:** RCW 34.05.538 was repealed by 1989 c 175 § 185, effective July 1, 1989.

Purpose -- 1974 ex.s. c 179: See note following RCW [43.21C.080](#).

43.21C.130

Model ordinances.

The department of ecology, in consultation with concerned state agencies, shall with the assistance of the associations of county prosecutors and city attorneys, the association of county elected officials, the Washington state association of counties, and the association of cities, draft model ordinances for use by counties, cities and towns in drafting their ordinances under this chapter.

[1974 ex.s. c 179 § 10.]

Notes:

Purpose -- 1974 ex.s. c 179: See note following RCW [43.21C.080](#).

43.21C.135

Authority of local governmental units to adopt rules, guidelines and model ordinances by reference.

(1) All public and municipal corporations, political subdivisions, and counties of the state are authorized to adopt rules, ordinances, and resolutions which incorporate any of the following by reference to the appropriate sections of the Washington Administrative Code:

(a) Rules and guidelines adopted under RCW [43.21C.110](#)(1) in accordance with the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW;

(b) Model ordinances adopted by the department of ecology under RCW [43.21C.130](#) in accordance with the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

(2) If any rule, ordinance, or resolution is adopted by reference pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, any publication of such rule, ordinance, or resolution shall be accompanied by a summary of the contents of the sections of the Washington Administrative Code referred to. Such summaries shall be provided to the adopting units of local government by the department of ecology: PROVIDED, That any proposal for a rule, ordinance or resolution which would adopt by reference rules and guidelines or model ordinances pursuant to this section shall be accompanied by the full text of the material to be adopted which need not be published but shall be maintained on file for public use and examination.

(3) Whenever any rule, ordinance, or resolution is adopted by reference pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, the corporation, political subdivision, or county of the state adopting the rule, ordinance, or resolution shall maintain on file for public use and examination not less than three copies of the sections of the Washington Administrative Code referred to.

[1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 99 § 1.]

43.21C.150

RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) inapplicable when statement previously prepared pursuant to national environmental policy act.

The requirements of RCW [43.21C.030](#)(2)(c) pertaining to the preparation of a detailed statement by branches of government shall not apply when an adequate detailed statement has been previously prepared pursuant to the national environmental policy act of 1969, in which event said prepared statement may be utilized in lieu of a separately prepared statement under RCW [43.21C.030](#)(2)(c).

[1975 1st ex.s. c 206 § 1; 1974 ex.s. c 179 § 12.]

Notes:

Purpose -- 1974 ex.s. c 179: See note following RCW [43.21C.080](#).

43.21C.160

Utilization of statement prepared under RCW 43.21C.030 to implement *chapter 90.62 RCW — Utilization of *chapter 90.62 RCW procedures to satisfy RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

In the implementation of *chapter 90.62 RCW (the Environmental Coordination Procedures Act of 1973), the department of ecology, consistent with guidelines adopted by the council shall adopt rules which insure that one detailed statement prepared under RCW [43.21C.030](#) may be utilized by all branches of government participating in the processing of a master application. Whenever the procedures established pursuant to *chapter 90.62 RCW are used, those procedures shall be utilized wherever possible to satisfy the procedural requirements of RCW [43.21C.030](#)(2)(c). The time limits for challenges provided for in RCW [43.21C.080](#)(2) shall be applicable when such procedures are so utilized.

[1974 ex.s. c 179 § 13.]

Notes:

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 90.62 RCW was repealed by 1995 c 347 § 619.

Purpose -- 1974 ex.s. c 179: See note following RCW [43.21C.080](#).

43.21C.165

Challenges to consistency of rules adopted pursuant to RCW 43.21C.110 and 43.21C.160 — Procedure — Finality.

See RCW 43.21B.250.

43.21C.170

Council on environmental policy.

The legislature may establish a council on environmental policy to review and assist in the implementation of this chapter.

[1983 c 117 § 6; 1974 ex.s. c 179 § 4. Formerly RCW [43.21C.100](#).]

43.21C.175

Council on environmental policy — Personnel.

The council may employ such personnel as are necessary for the performances of its duties.

[1974 ex.s. c 179 § 5. Formerly RCW [43.21C.105](#).]

43.21C.210

Certain actions during state of emergency exempt from chapter.

This chapter does not apply to actions authorized by RCW 43.37.215 and 43.37.220 which are undertaken during a state of emergency declared by the governor under RCW 43.06.210.

[1981 c 278 § 4.]

43.21C.220

Incorporation of city or town exempt from chapter.

The incorporation of a city or town is exempted from compliance with this chapter.

[1982 c 220 § 6.]

Notes:

Severability -- 1982 c 220: See note following RCW 36.93.100.

Incorporation proceedings exempt from chapter: RCW 36.93.170.

43.21C.222**Annexation by city or town exempt from chapter.**

Annexation of territory by a city or town is exempted from compliance with this chapter.

[1994 c 216 § 19.]

Notes:

Effective date -- 1994 c 216: See note following RCW 35.02.015.

43.21C.225**Consolidation and annexation of cities and towns exempt from chapter.**

Consolidations of cities or towns, and the annexations of all of a city or town by another city or town, are exempted from compliance with this chapter.

[1985 c 281 § 29.]

Notes:

Severability -- 1985 c 281: See RCW 35.10.905.

43.21C.227**Disincorporation of a city or town or reduction of city or town limits exempt from chapter.**

(1) The disincorporation of a city or town is exempt from compliance with this chapter.

(2) The reduction of city or town limits is exempt from compliance with this chapter.

[2002 c 93 § 2.]

Notes:

Intent -- 2002 c 93: "Incorporations and annexations are exempt from the state environmental policy act. However, there are no comparable exemptions for reductions of city limits or disincorporations. It is the legislature's intent to provide that a reduction in city limits or disincorporation is not subject to the state environmental policy act." [2002 c 93 § 1.]

43.21C.229**Infill development — Categorical exemptions from chapter.**

(1) In order to accommodate infill development and thereby realize the goals and policies of comprehensive plans adopted according to chapter 36.70A RCW, a city or county planning under RCW 36.70A.040 is authorized by this section to establish categorical exemptions from the requirements of this chapter. An exemption adopted under this section applies even if it differs from the categorical exemptions adopted by rule of the department under RCW [43.21C.110\(1\)\(a\)](#). An exemption may be adopted by a city or county under this section if it meets the following criteria:

(a) It categorically exempts government action related to development that is new residential or mixed-use development proposed to fill in an urban growth area designated according to RCW 36.70A.110, where current density and intensity of use in the area is lower than called for in the goals and policies of the applicable comprehensive plan;

(b) It does not exempt government action related to development that would exceed the density or intensity of use called for in the goals and policies of the applicable comprehensive plan; and

(c) The city or county's applicable comprehensive plan was previously subjected to environmental analysis through an environmental impact statement under the requirements of this chapter prior to adoption.

(2) Any categorical exemption adopted by a city or county under this section shall be subject to the rules of the department adopted according to RCW [43.21C.110\(1\)\(a\)](#) that provide exceptions to the use of categorical exemptions adopted by the department.

[2003 c 298 § 1.]

Notes:

Severability -- 2003 c 298: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2003 c 298 § 3.]

43.21C.230

Development and adoption of plan under chapter 43.180 RCW exempt from chapter.

This chapter does not apply to the development or adoption of the plan required to be developed and adopted under chapter 43.180 RCW.

[1983 c 161 § 29.]

Notes:

Severability -- Effective dates -- 1983 c 161: See RCW 43.180.903 and 43.180.904.

43.21C.232

Infrastructure improvements necessary to implement renewable fuel standards — Application and decision processing. (Expires January 1, 2009.)

(1) Lead agencies, and other agencies with jurisdiction, shall process all applications and decisions relating to infrastructure improvements or activities necessary to implement renewable fuel standards under chapter 19.112 RCW and RCW 43.19.642 in a defined and efficient manner according to specific timelines and practices designed to minimize processing and review times. Such applications and decisions may be processed prior to competing applications and decisions, to the extent appropriate under current law. Application and permit review requirements, turnaround times, and agency and applicant performance according to these standards shall be posted and made easily accessible to the public.

(2) Applications and decisions subject to the provisions of this section include, but are not limited to, any attendant and nonexempt state environmental policy act requirements under RCW [43.21C.030](#) and chapter 197-11 WAC, or other license, permit, or approval requirements relating to the:

(a) Installation of new storage tanks; pumps; any project to allow for increasing refining and blending capacity; any project to allow for efficiency improvements for refiners, blenders, or bulk plant operators; and any modification to off-loading or on-loading racks;

(b) Addition of heating or other equipment to biodiesel storage tanks or tanks that hold a blended product; and

(c) Replacement of underground fuel storage tanks, aboveground fuel storage tanks, pumps, and large bulk tanks.

(3) This section does not apply to biodiesel or ethanol production facilities.

(4) This section expires January 1, 2009.

[2007 c 308 § 1.]

43.21C.240

Project review under the growth management act.

(1) If the requirements of subsection (2) of this section are satisfied, a county, city, or town reviewing a project action shall determine that the requirements for environmental analysis, protection, and mitigation measures in the county, city, or town's development regulations and comprehensive plans adopted under chapter 36.70A RCW, and in other applicable local, state, or federal laws and rules provide adequate analysis of and mitigation for the specific adverse environmental impacts of the project action to which the requirements apply. Rules adopted by the department according to RCW [43.21C.110](#) regarding project specific impacts that may not have been adequately addressed apply to any determination made under this section. In these situations, in which all adverse environmental impacts will be mitigated below the level of significance as a result of mitigation measures included by changing, clarifying, or conditioning of the proposed action and/or regulatory requirements of development regulations adopted under chapter

36.70A RCW or other local, state, or federal laws, a determination of nonsignificance or a mitigated determination of nonsignificance is the proper threshold determination.

(2) A county, city, or town shall make the determination provided for in subsection (1) of this section if:

(a) In the course of project review, including any required environmental analysis, the local government considers the specific probable adverse environmental impacts of the proposed action and determines that these specific impacts are adequately addressed by the development regulations or other applicable requirements of the comprehensive plan, subarea plan element of the comprehensive plan, or other local, state, or federal rules or laws; and

(b) The local government bases or conditions its approval on compliance with these requirements or mitigation measures.

(3) If a county, city, or town's comprehensive plans, subarea plans, and development regulations adequately address a project's probable specific adverse environmental impacts, as determined under subsections (1) and (2) of this section, the county, city, or town shall not impose additional mitigation under this chapter during project review. Project review shall be integrated with environmental analysis under this chapter.

(4) A comprehensive plan, subarea plan, or development regulation shall be considered to adequately address an impact if the county, city, or town, through the planning and environmental review process under chapter 36.70A RCW and this chapter, has identified the specific adverse environmental impacts and:

(a) The impacts have been avoided or otherwise mitigated; or

(b) The legislative body of the county, city, or town has designated as acceptable certain levels of service, land use designations, development standards, or other land use planning required or allowed by chapter 36.70A RCW.

(5) In deciding whether a specific adverse environmental impact has been addressed by an existing rule or law of another agency with jurisdiction with environmental expertise with regard to a specific environmental impact, the county, city, or town shall consult orally or in writing with that agency and may expressly defer to that agency. In making this deferral, the county, city, or town shall base or condition its project approval on compliance with these other existing rules or laws.

(6) Nothing in this section limits the authority of an agency in its review or mitigation of a project to adopt or otherwise rely on environmental analyses and requirements under other laws, as provided by this chapter.

(7) This section shall apply only to a county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040.

[2003 c 298 § 2; 1995 c 347 § 202.]

Notes:

Severability -- 2003 c 298: See note following RCW [43.21C.229](#).

Findings -- Intent -- 1995 c 347 § 202: "(1) The legislature finds in adopting RCW [43.21C.240](#) that:

(a) Comprehensive plans and development regulations adopted by counties, cities, and towns under chapter 36.70A RCW and environmental laws and rules adopted by the state and federal government have addressed a wide range of environmental subjects and impacts. These plans, regulations, rules, and laws often provide environmental analysis and mitigation measures for project actions without the need for an environmental impact statement or further project mitigation.

(b) Existing plans, regulations, rules, or laws provide environmental analysis and measures that avoid or otherwise mitigate the probable specific adverse environmental impacts of proposed projects should be integrated with, and should not be duplicated by, environmental review under chapter 43.21C RCW.

(c) Proposed projects should continue to receive environmental review, which should be conducted in a manner that is integrated with and does not duplicate other requirements. Project-level environmental review should be used to: (i) Review and document consistency with comprehensive plans and development regulations; (ii) provide prompt and coordinated review by government agencies and the public on compliance with applicable environmental laws and plans, including mitigation for specific project impacts that have not been considered and addressed at the plan or development regulation level; and (iii) ensure accountability by local government to applicants and the public for requiring and implementing mitigation measures.

(d) When a project permit application is filed, an agency should analyze the proposal's environmental impacts, as required by applicable regulations and the environmental review process required by this chapter, in one project review process. The project review process should include land use, environmental, public, and governmental review, as provided by the applicable regulations and the rules adopted under this chapter, so that documents prepared under different requirements can be reviewed together by the public and other agencies. This project review will provide an agency with the information necessary to make a decision on the proposed project.

(e) Through this project review process: (i) If the applicable regulations require studies that adequately analyze all of the project's specific probable adverse environmental impacts, additional studies under this chapter will not be necessary on those impacts; (ii) if the applicable regulations require measures that adequately address such environmental impacts, additional measures would likewise not be required under this chapter; and (iii) if the applicable regulations do not adequately analyze or

address a proposal's specific probable adverse environmental impacts, this chapter provides the authority and procedures for additional review.

(2) The legislature intends that a primary role of environmental review under chapter 43.21C RCW is to focus on the gaps and overlaps that may exist in applicable laws and requirements related to a proposed action. The review of project actions conducted by counties, cities, and towns planning under RCW 36.70A.040 should integrate environmental review with project review. Chapter 43.21C RCW should not be used as a substitute for other land use planning and environmental requirements." [1995 c 347 § 201.]

Finding -- Severability -- Part headings and table of contents not law -- 1995 c 347: See notes following RCW 36.70A.470.

43.21C.250

Forest practices board — Emergency rules — Exempt from chapter.

The duration and process for adopting emergency rules by the forest practices board pertaining to forest practices and the protection of aquatic resources as provided in RCW 76.09.055 are exempt from the procedural requirements of this chapter.

[1999 sp.s. c 4 § 203.]

Notes:

Effective date -- 1999 sp.s. c 4 §§ 201, 202, and 203: See note following RCW 76.09.055.

Part headings not law -- 1999 sp.s. c 4: See note following RCW 77.85.180.

43.21C.260

Certain actions not subject to RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) — Threshold determination on a watershed analysis.

(1) Decisions pertaining to the following kinds of actions under chapter 4, Laws of 1999 sp. sess. are not subject to any procedural requirements implementing RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c): (a) Approval of forest road maintenance and abandonment plans under chapter 76.09 RCW and *RCW 77.55.100; (b) approval by the department of natural resources of future timber harvest schedules involving east-side clear cuts under rules implementing chapter 76.09 RCW; (c) acquisitions of forest lands in stream channel migration zones under RCW 76.09.040; and (d) acquisitions of conservation easements pertaining to forest lands in riparian zones under RCW 76.13.120.

(2) For purposes of the department's threshold determination on a watershed analysis, the department shall not make a determination of significance unless the prescriptions themselves, compared to rules or prescriptions in place prior to the analysis, will cause probable significant adverse impact on elements of the environment other than those addressed in the watershed analysis process. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to effect the outcome of pending litigation regarding the department's authority in making a threshold determination on a watershed analysis.

[2003 c 39 § 24; 1999 sp.s. c 4 § 1201.]

Notes:

***Reviser's note:** RCW 77.55.100 was repealed by 2005 c 146 § 1006.

Part headings not law -- 1999 sp.s. c 4: See note following RCW 77.85.180.

43.21C.270

Certain secure community transition facilities not subject to this chapter. (Expires June 30, 2009.)

An emergency has been caused by the need to expeditiously site facilities to house sexually violent predators who have been committed under chapter 71.09 RCW. To meet this emergency, secure community transition facilities sited pursuant to the preemption provisions of RCW 71.09.342 and secure facilities sited pursuant to the preemption provisions of RCW 71.09.250 are not subject to the provisions of this chapter.

This section expires June 30, 2009.

[2002 c 68 § 12.]

Notes:

Purpose -- Severability -- Effective date -- 2002 c 68: See notes following RCW 36.70A.200.

43.21C.300

Workshops — Handbook.

The department of ecology shall conduct annual statewide workshops and publish an annual state environmental policy act handbook or supplement to assist persons in complying with the provisions of this chapter and the implementing rules. The workshops and handbook shall include, but not be limited to, measures to assist in preparation, processing, and review of environmental documents, relevant court decisions affecting this chapter or rules adopted under this chapter, legislative changes to this chapter, administrative changes to the rules, and any other information which will assist in orderly implementation of this chapter and rules.

The department shall develop the handbook and conduct the workshops in cooperation with, but not limited to, state agencies, the association of Washington cities, the Washington association of counties, educational institutions, and other groups or associations interested in the state environmental policy act.

[1983 c 117 § 9.]

43.21C.400

Unfinished nuclear power projects — Council action exempt from this chapter.

Council actions pursuant to the transfer of the site or portions of the site under RCW 80.50.300 are exempt from the provisions of this chapter.

[1996 c 4 § 4.]

Notes:

Severability -- Effective date -- 1996 c 4: See RCW 80.50.903 and 80.50.904.

Energy facility site evaluation council: RCW 80.50.030.

43.21C.900

Short title.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "State Environmental Policy Act" or "SEPA".

[1995 c 347 § 207; 1971 ex.s. c 109 § 7.]

Notes:

Finding -- Severability -- Part headings and table of contents not law -- 1995 c 347: See notes following RCW 36.70A.470.

43.21C.910

Severability — 1974 ex.s. c 179.

If any provision of this 1974 amendatory act, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act, or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

[1974 ex.s. c 179 § 16.]

43.21C.911**Section headings not part of law — 1983 c 117.**

Section headings as used in this act do not constitute any part of the law.

[1983 c 117 § 14.]

43.21C.912**Applicability — 1983 c 117.**

Sections 3 and 4 of this act apply to agency decisions and to appeal proceedings prospectively only and not retrospectively. Sections 1, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of this act may be applied by agencies retrospectively.

[1983 c 117 § 15.]

43.21C.913**Severability — 1983 c 117.**

If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

[1983 c 117 § 16.]

43.21C.914**Effective dates — 1983 c 117.**

(1) Sections 1, 2, and 4 through 16 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [April 23, 1983].

(2) Section 3 of this act shall take effect one hundred eighty days after the remainder of this act goes into effect under subsection (1) of this section.

[1983 c 117 § 17.]