

Revisions to Port State Environmental Policy Act Policies

Briefing Overview

- State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) background
- Proposed revisions to existing Port SEPA procedures
- Proposed new Port climate change policy

SEPA Background

- SEPA is a state law that directs local and state agencies to identify and evaluate the environmental impacts of their actions.
- SEPA was modeled after the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- SEPA is intended to result in informed decision making and better environmental outcomes.

Port SEPA Procedures

- Current Port SEPA procedures:
 - Resolution 3028 (adopted 1986)
 - Resolution 3211 (adopted 1995)
 - Resolution 3539 (adopted 2005)
- Need for Update/Revisions:
 - Have been amended multiple times;
 - Hard to track all of changes;
 - Do not reflect changes to SEPA laws and Port organization

Proposed Revisions

- Would consolidate procedures into a single document;
- Updated to conform with current law;
- Reflect changes to Port organization and process;
- Cleanup and edits that make the document easier to use and read.

SEPA and Climate Change

Does SEPA require consideration of climate change impacts?

- Legal challenges for failure to consider GHG emissions in environmental review
- WA GHG reduction laws
- NEPA Guidance on Consideration of GHG emissions
- Ecology “Working Paper” on addressing GHGs and climate change under SEPA

SEPA and Climate Change

Why a Port SEPA Climate Policy?

- Clarify to public and staff how Port will address climate change under SEPA;
- Improve consistency with respect to environmental decision making;
- Promote improvements to projects that reduce GHG emissions.

What Is In The Proposed Policy

- Statement of Port policy to consider GHG emissions and the effect of changes in climate on proposed actions;
- Identification and calculation of project emissions;
- Encouraging mitigation;
- Guidance for making “threshold determination”;
- Consideration of effects of climate change on projects.

Next Steps

- 30 day public comment period;
 - Staff consideration of public comments;
 - First reading to Commission;
 - Second reading to Commission – request adoption
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- Questions?