

ORDINANCE NO.

**ESTABLISHING SKAGIT COUNTY CODE TITLE 2.22,
SKAGIT COUNTY CLIMATE IMPACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS, a scientific near-consensus holds that climate change will continue to disrupt the status quo climate; and

WHEREAS, projected climate change impacts on Skagit County's citizens, infrastructure and environment due to severe weather, rising temperatures, flooding and rising sea levels pose a risk to our community's health, critical infrastructure, and economic viability; and

WHEREAS, on November 28, 2000, recognizing the need for locally-grounded science review and advice, the Skagit County Board of Commissioners ("Board") adopted Resolution No. 18082, establishing a science advisory panel to provide science review related to agricultural buffer zone management; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the Board adopted Resolution No. 20080304, establishing a program and taskforce for sustainability and climate change adaptation and risk reduction (the "2008 Resolution"), directing a broad suite of climate change-related measures by County government and its departments; and

WHEREAS, the 2008 Resolution established a Climate Action and Sustainability Taskforce, charged with preparation of a Climate Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the 2010 Skagit County Climate Action Plan prepared by the Taskforce identified a broad suit of measures related to climate change, many of which were subsequently adopted and/or implemented; and

WHEREAS, the 2010 Climate Action Plan recommended the establishment of a Resource Advisory Committee to offer advice on natural resource issues; and

WHEREAS, on June 23, 2025, the Board approved Ordinance O20250004, adopting the 2025 Periodic Comprehensive Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Comprehensive Plan includes a new Climate and Resiliency Element, which establishes goals and policies to guide the County in addressing climate change with respect to land use; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Comprehensive Plan's Climate and Resiliency Element directs the County to, among other things, prepare for climate change scenarios; enhance resilience to climate impacts and natural hazards; and protect and promote environmental, economic, human health, and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Skagit's historic floodplain, including the Skagit River valley, Skagit Delta and Samish Delta, involves significant flood, sea level rise, dam failure and lahar risk, with climate change likely to make flooding worse; and

WHEREAS, through sacrifice and diligence spanning across generations and millennia, the people of the Skagit have protected and sustained natural resource lands, industry and culture, which the Board seeks to protect, sustain and harmonize over the long term through appropriate planning and resilience measures; and

WHEREAS, the Board further seeks to protect the Skagit's natural environment for the recreational benefits and ecosystem services it provides; and

WHEREAS, climate change stands to significantly impact the interests of the Skagit's four-federally recognized tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, preparation for and adaptation to climate change invokes a broad range of questions and issues, many involving significant scientific uncertainty as to their extent and timeline; and

WHEREAS, climate change adaptation and risk reduction necessarily spans across Skagit County departments, functions and responsibilities, including Public Works, Emergency Management, Planning and Development Services, Health and others, as well as strategic Board-level policy decisions; and

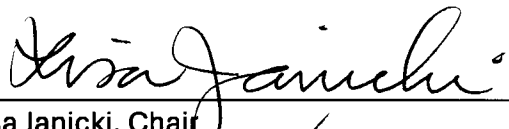
WHEREAS, the Board finds the need for an organizational-level climate impact advisory body to advise the Board on matters related to climate change adaptation and risk reduction, developed in a public, unbiased and transparent manner, focused on the long-term interests and needs of Skagit County and its people, lands, natural resources, and natural environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Skagit County Board of Commissioners that Skagit County Code Chapter 2.22, Skagit County Climate Impact Advisory Committee, is hereby established as set forth in Exhibit A to this Ordinance.

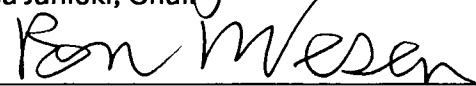
WITNESS OUR HANDS AND THE OFFICIAL SEAL OF OUR OFFICE this 15 day of December 2025.



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



Lisa Janicki, Chair



Ron Wesen, Commissioner



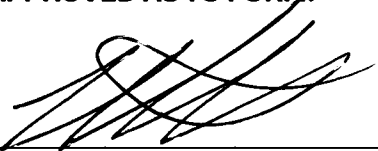
Peter Browning, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Clerk of the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Will Honea, Senior Deputy
Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney

Chapter 2.22

SKAGIT COUNTY CLIMATE IMPACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2.22.010 Established.

There is hereby established the Skagit County climate impact advisory committee (Committee).

2.22.020 Purpose.

The principal purpose of the Committee is to collect, analyze and discuss vetted scientific publications and reports, on that basis providing recommendations to the Skagit County Board of Commissioners (Board) on issues related to climate change impact risk, risk reduction, and adaptation.

The Board intends that the Committee will bring together scientific, local and indigenous knowledge in collaborative, transparent dialogue, providing the Board with Skagit-specific climate risk assessment and policy options that are broadly accepted in the Skagit community, within the scope of the County's jurisdiction, authority and direct responsibilities.

2.22.030 Function.

To advise the Board of County Commissioners, in support of the County's climate action efforts, specifically as follows:

- (1) Review available vetted publications and reports, and on that basis provide recommendations to the Board to support climate risk reduction and adaptation policies associated with sea level rise, floods, wildfires, drought, impacts to wildlife, food production, ecosystem services and human migration, and other climate change-related risks and challenges, to be used in community planning, infrastructure and capital facilities development, with a focus on protecting, sustaining and harmonizing Skagit County's natural resource industries (farming, fisheries, forestry, aquaculture).
- (2) Advise the Board on climate-related impacts to Skagit County's natural environment, including impacts to recreation, wildlife, and ecosystem services.
- (3) Advise the Board regarding new and emerging business concepts related to climate change adaptation and risk reduction, such as renewable energy and carbon sequestration, and their compatibility with the long-range protection and sustainment of Skagit County's natural resource lands, industries and natural environment.

(4) Make recommendations to the Board on public health and housing policies related to climate change adaptation and risk reduction, focusing on climate change impacts specific to Skagit County.

(5) Make recommendations to the Board on updates to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with County goals related to climate change adaptation and risk reduction.

(6) Make recommendations to the Board on updates to Skagit County land use policies and development regulations in support of County goals related to climate change adaptation and risk reduction.

(7) Serve as a conduit for information exchange and engagement in support of Skagit County's climate change adaptation and risk reduction.

(8) Make recommendations to the Board regarding state and federal climate policy priorities and their impact on the Skagit County's lands, resources, interests, community and natural environment.

(9) The Board may from time to time direct the Committee to prioritize analysis and recommendation regarding emerging scientific questions within the County's jurisdiction, authority or direct responsibility.

(10) Scientific publications and reports will be limited to those that are technical in nature. Documents that include policy recommendations or conclusory opinions will not be utilized by the Committee.

2.22.040 Membership – Term of office.

(1) The Committee shall consist of fifteen (15) voting members.

(2) Committee members must have previous work or educational experience in subjects including: climate change; civil or hydraulic engineering; hydrology; energy production and conservation; health; farming; fisheries; forestry; flood risk management and planning; ecosystem conservation; and/or land use planning.

(3) All Committee members must be full-time residents of Skagit County. This requirement shall not be construed to prohibit qualified non-resident experts from presenting publications, information and scientific opinion to the Committee, at the Committee's discretion.

(4) A Committee seat is reserved for each of the four federally-recognized Skagit Tribes (Swinomish, Upper Skagit, Sauk-Suiattle, Samish). Designation must be by written action

by the Tribe's governing body. If a Tribe does not designate a representative, that seat will remain reserved and open until filled by that Tribe's governing body.

(5) One Committee seat is reserved for a representative of Skagit County's dike districts, responsible for the operation and management of the Skagit's riverine levees and marine dikes. If dike districts do not designate a representative, that seat will remain reserved and open until filled by the dike districts.

(6) One Committee seat is reserved for a representative of Skagit County's drainage and irrigation districts, responsible for drainage, flood return flows, and irrigation in the diked and drained portion of the Skagit. If drainage/irrigation districts do not designate a representative, that seat will remain reserved and open until filled by the drainage/irrigation districts.

(7) One Committee seat is reserved for a citizen, unaffiliated with any governmental entity, principally involved in climate change advocacy and education in Skagit County.

(8) The remaining eight Committee seats are open to any Skagit County resident meeting the qualifications set forth by subsection (2) and (3) of this section. An applicant will be considered a Skagit County resident only if registered to vote in Skagit County. The Board will select Committee applicants principally based on their likely capacity to contribute informed input, productive discussion and sound Skagit-focused judgment in the development of recommendations.

(9) A quorum consists of at least half of the Committee's appointed voting members.

(10) To the fullest extent possible, the Committee will make all decisions and recommendations by consensus. To the extent consensus is not possible on an administrative matter, decisions will be made by majority vote. The Board encourages transparent and respectful debate. In the event consensus is not possible as to a substantive recommendation to the Board, dissenting Committee members are encouraged to submit a dissent.

(11) A County staff member with relevant background and experience will serve on the Committee as a nonvoting member, voting only if needed to decide a tie vote of the Committee as to an administrative matter.

(12) The Committee will assist the Board in making significant public policy decisions., Committee members are expected to direct recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. To protect the Committee's integrity and ability to effectively function, Committee members may not advertise their Committee membership or purport to speak

for the interests of Skagit County by virtue of Committee membership when engaging in public policy advocacy or the expression of scientific opinion outside of the Committee.

(13) The Board will appoint Committee members, consulting with County staff and other offices to identify the expertise required to address current needs. In application for membership, Committee members must disclose any financial or economic interest they may have in the Committee's recommendations. Member terms will be three years from the year of appointment. Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation.

(14) Committee members may be removed for cause by the Board, including (a) failure to attend at least two-thirds of all scheduled Committee meetings within a one-year period; or (b) failure to comply with the other requirements of this Title.

2.22.050 Organization – Meetings.

Meetings of the Committee will be open and accessible to the public, and subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. At every meeting, the Committee will schedule an open session to take public comment on issues associated with the Committee. Written records of meetings and any research, findings and recommendations shall be kept. Such records shall be public and promptly made available on Skagit County's website. All application materials submitted to the Board and relied upon in selecting Committee members will promptly be made available on Skagit County's website. The Committee will adopt its own rules and procedures for the conduct of business consistent with this ordinance, which must be approved by subsequent Board resolution. The Committee will elect (i) a chair from among its members who shall preside at its meetings; and (ii) a vice chair, who will preside in the chair's absence or incapacity. The Committee will determine its meeting schedule and agenda, but shall meet at least quarterly, not more than monthly. The Committee may form and appoint ad hoc committees to work on specific issues, so long as at least two Committee members are also members of each ad hoc committee.

2.22.060 Committee staffing.

The Committee is encouraged to operate and hold its meetings as independent of County staffing and resources as possible. The Committee may request administrative and other support through the Board's office. The Committee is authorized to request information from administrative departments as necessary, through the Board's office.