

Electric Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plan

It is in the best interest of the state, our citizens, and our natural resources to identify the sources of wildland fires; identify and implement best practices to reduce the prevalence and intensity of those wildland fires; put those practices in place; and by putting those practices in place, reduce the risk of wildland fires and damage and losses resulting from those fires.

Therefore, the legislature intends to authorize the identification of best practices guidelines and to require that electric utilities provide their wildfire mitigation plans to the state in order to promote public transparency.

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The department, in consultation with the energy resilience and emergency management office of the department of commerce, shall contract with an independent consultant with experience in developing electric utility wildfire mitigation plans to develop an electric utility wildfire mitigation plan format and a list of elements to be included in electric utility wildfire mitigation plans.

When developing the plan format and list of elements, the department shall seek input from the utilities and transportation commission, **the utility wildland fire prevention advisory committee**, electric utilities, the state fire marshal, the governor's office of Indian affairs, and the public.

By April 1, 2024, the department shall make public a recommended format and list of elements for electric utility wildfire mitigation plans.

By October 31, 2024, and every three years thereafter, each utility must review, if appropriate revise, and adopt its wildfire mitigation plan.

By December 31, 2024, the department must submit to the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives a compilation and summary of existing wildfire mitigation plans maintained by electric utilities.



Section 2

(2) The recommended elements must acknowledge that utilities serve areas that vary in topography, vegetation, population, and other characteristics, and that best practices guidelines within each element must recognize that a utility's wildfire mitigation measures will be designed to fit site-specific circumstances. The recommended elements must include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Vegetation management along transmission and distribution lines and near associated equipment;
- (b) Infrastructure inspection and maintenance repair activities, schedules, and recordkeeping;
- (c) Modifications or upgrades to facilities and construction of new facilities to incorporate cost-effective measures to minimize fire risk;
- (d) Preventative programs, including adoption of new technologies to harden utility infrastructure;
- (e) Operational procedures;
- (f) Identification of appropriate widths for vegetation management and rights-of-way, including the consideration of fire-resistant vegetation alternatives; and
- (g) Public and interested parties' engagement and communication plans addressing wildfire safety and risk mitigation.



Utilities Required to Develop a Wildfire Mitigation Plan

- Consumer-owned utility means a municipal electric utility formed under Title 35 RCW,
- Public utility district formed under Title 54 RCW,
- Irrigation district formed under chapter 87.03 RCW,
- A cooperative formed under chapter 23.86 RCW,
- Mutual corporation or association formed under chapter 24.06 RCW,
- Investor-owned utility owned by investors that meets the definition of "corporation" as defined in RCW 80.04.010

“Engaged in distributing electricity to more than one retail electric customer in the state.”



In your meeting materials you will find the draft of the proposed template and suggested elements of a wildfire mitigation strategy and approach.

Currently, we are specifically presenting the draft template to all state electric utilities, the **Wildland Fire Prevention Advisory Committee**, the state Fire Marshal, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and the Utilities and Transportation Commission. **The public will be provided with opportunities to comment on the template before it is final.**

The current elements were selected by identifying best practices, aligning with state wildfire mitigation goals, and soliciting feedback from advisory stakeholders including the Utility Wildland Fire Prevention Advisory Committee.

While the elements included are intended to capture a wide range of potential activities, it is neither exhaustive in scope nor is it expected that all electric utilities will have programs or initiatives identified for all elements in the template. The template provides suggested topics, language, and guidance for completing each section.



How Can WFAC Members Contribute?

You can contribute to the final draft of the plan template by providing your reactions to the overall framework of the plan in achieving wildfire hazard mitigation and identifying whether there are specific elements of the plan that are missing or should be enhanced.

This template will be finalized on April 1, 2024, and we request that any feedback or comments be returned in written form no later than March 15, 2024, by sending an email to: bryan.perrenod@dnr.wa.gov, with **Draft Mitigation Plan Template** in the subject line. All feedback received by this date will be considered by DNR and the Department of Commerce for inclusion in the final version of the template.



Thank You!

Any Questions?

