
WASHINGTON STATE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

FACTS

Date Started: 2005

Legislation:

WSAS was formed in response to authorizing legislation signed by Washington's governor in 2005. In April, 2007, WSAS was constituted by the Secretary of State as a private, independent 501(c)(3).

See Senate Bill ESB6381.

Products/Deliverables:

- Study Committee Reports
- Summary of the Proceedings
- White Papers

MISSION

The Washington State Academy of Sciences (WSAS) provides expert scientific and engineering analysis to inform public policy-making, and works to increase the role and visibility of science in the State of Washington. Formed as a working academy, not an honorary society, WSAS is modeled on the National Research Council. Its most important early work is aimed at securing the kinds of commissioned studies that are WSAS's primary mission—definitive analyses of the best scientific knowledge available on sharply defined scientific questions.

BENEFIT AND USE OF FINDINGS

The WSAS was established to provide authoritative scientific and technical analyses to the State of Washington on a host of challenging public issues, including health and health care, transportation, agriculture, energy, biodiversity preservation, biotechnology, climate change, and education. Its reports, which provide reliable, non-partisan, scientific analyses, enable decision makers to make their decisions using the best possible scientific and technical information, analyses, and interpretations. The WSAS does not recommend public policy. It does not accept commissions for studies designed to advocate particular legislation. Rather, its study committees analyze and interpret the available scientific information relevant to important public policy issues. Its peer-reviewed and board-approved reports provide the basis for informed public discussion and decision-making but the appropriate public servants make the final policy decisions. Because carrying out a thorough WSAS study requires substantial time, the WSAS has its greatest value in facilitating advance thinking and preparation so that decision-makers can anticipate problems and develop appropriate response capabilities before challenges become critical.

SUBJECT AREAS

Current projects include:

- Opportunities for Addressing Laminated Root Rot Caused by *Phellinus Sulphurascens* in Washington's Forests
- Initiative 522-Addressing the labeling of genetically modified foods
- Puget Sound Partnership effort: Negotiations -have begun with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) to define the scope of a first commissioned study

COMMITTEE

Members of the Washington State Academy of Sciences come from academic research, government, and industry, and represent a broad range of scientific, technical, and engineering fields. All members are residents of Washington State and U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. The Founding Class of WSAS members was constituted by invitation. All Washington scientists, engineers, and other researchers who have been elected to the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, or the Institute of Medicine were offered the opportunity to join WSAS. Of the 156 who were invited, 105 agreed to join and participate in the scientific advisory work that is the organization's mission. New members of WSAS will be elected annually by a process developed by the Nominations Committee and in accord with WSAS bylaws. Study committee members serve without compensation.

THE STUDY PROCESS

Typically, studies move through four phases:

- statement of task;
- committee formation;
- analysis and report preparation; and
- report review, approval, and publication.

Each of the phases is designed to ensure that the analyses and evaluations of information provided to sponsors are of the highest quality.

OVERSIGHT

It does not accept commissions for studies designed to advocate particular legislation. Its studies and resultant peer-reviewed and board-approved reports provide the basis for informed public discussion and decision. The management of all the affairs, property, and interests of the Academy shall be vested in a Board of Directors consisting of 12 members in addition to the President, President Elect, Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board is responsible for governing the WSAS affairs in accordance with its bylaws. The Executive Director position is Ex. Officio non-voting. Reports are vetted by the WSAS review process and approved for publication by the Board of Directors.

FUNDING SOURCES

Several funding options are available to sponsors. These include contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and purchase orders. A project may have one or several sponsors. Federal sponsors interested in having the Academies conduct a study can obtain their services on a sole source basis because of their unique origins and status. The Academies do not compete for federal contracts. Grants, contracts, and gifts from states, foundations, individuals, and other sources also enable us to address critical issues on behalf of the nation.

Q: What is the criteria for undertaking a study?

- There is relevant and sufficient scientific information available on the issue to be addressed.
- Existing reports, if any, are out of date or inadequate.
- Sufficient funds are provided by the sponsor to cover study expenses, staff costs, and study-related overhead.

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