

May 27, 2025

Dear Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency,

Please read and consider these comments regarding the proposed Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency budget for 2025 – 26. If you agree with FOTC concerns, it is possible to postpone budget approval pursuant to YRCAA Administrative Code Part B, Section 10.2.3.

There is almost no accountability in the proposed budget. As written, the budget authorizes the ED/APCO to assign staff however he wishes, with no apparent planning and very little Board oversight.

The YRCAA is supposed to liaison with stakeholders, liaison with legislators, coordinate with Ecology and the EPA, educate the public on wood smoke, provide wood stove changeout, educate the public on air issues, listen to the public, stay current on air research and public health, assist small businesses, engage the media, comply with acceptable accounting practices, register sources of air pollution, maintain an air operating permit program that includes annual inspections, gather data, analyze data, perform air modeling, develop rules, implement a PM 2.5 reduction program, respond to complaints, respond to audit recommendations, implement an asbestos removal program, implement dust mitigation programs, maintain air monitors, report air quality levels, apply for grants, help the citizenry access funds under the Climate Commitment Act, staff Northwest Opacity Certification, maintain a website, respond to public records requests, respond to legal challenges, implement and enforce the state and federal clean air acts.

The proposed budget does not estimate how much time will be allocated for each of these activities. There is simply a lump sum of \$937,254 for salaries in base operations and similar lumps for grants and enterprise.

YRCAA Administrative Code Part B outlines and guides preparation of a budget. Although RCW 43.88 does not apply to the YRCAA because local clean agencies are not state agencies, Code B references this statute for instruction on how to develop a budget on page 10-1:

10.2.1 Budget Development

RCW 43.88.090 discusses the development process for the Budget that will be submitted for approval. YRCAA Program Managers will submit work plans to the Executive Director which include resource estimates for their programs. Items to be included in the FY Budget follow:

- a. Mission statement and established measurable goals for staff with strategies to achieve the goals;
- b. Brief description of Programs and accomplishments and objectives;
- c. Grant information, identified separately per RCW 43.88.032(2); and
- d. Chart of accounts.

These items are mostly missing from the proposed 2025-26 YRCAA budget. A proper budget should contain, at a minimum, stated goals and objectives for the upcoming fiscal year, a description of goals and objectives for the previous year that were met and unmet, a listing of work programs for each division and a list of priorities for each division in the event that staff cannot complete all projects.

FOTC brings these concerns to the table because we believe the YRCAA should explicitly designate funds for community engagement and education, for analysis of air quality data for Yakima County, for translation, and for writing grants that would generate additional income making the YRCAA more robust and effective.

Thank you for considering these suggestions.

Sincerely,

Executive Director, Friends of Toppenish Creek

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Jean Mendeza