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WASHINGTON STATE
Academy of Sciences



WSAS Projects

Authorized by the state legislature in 2005, the Washington State Academy of Sciences is organized to conduct studies assessing the scientific issues and providing technical analysis needed for informed public policy-making. By producing study reports of the highest quality, WSAS promotes understanding of the importance of the sciences in public affairs.

WASHINGTON STATE
Academy of Sciences

Contact Us

For further information on WSAS projects and for information about how to commission a study, contact Bobbie Berkowitz, WSAS Secretary, or Cyndie Fox, Program Manager.

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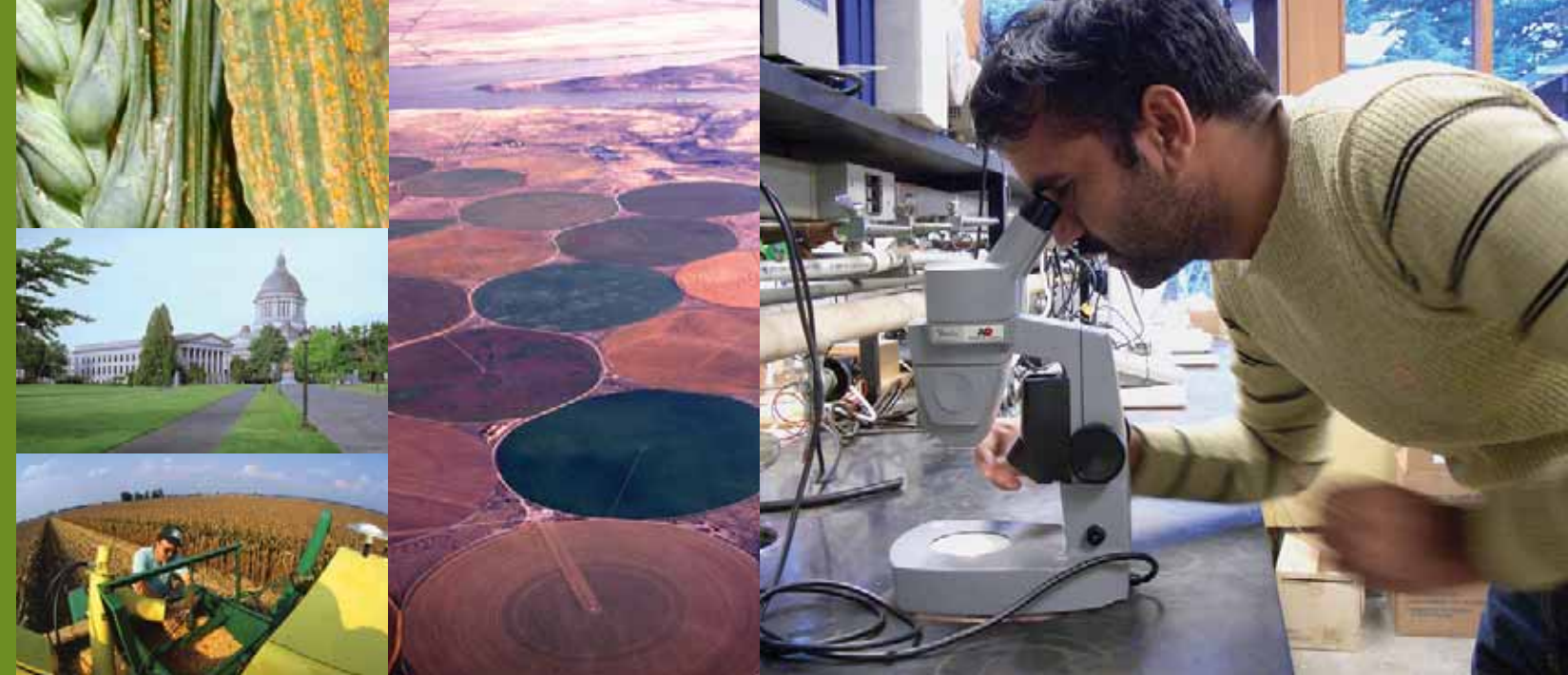
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SCIENCE
in the service of
WASHINGTON STATE

Advising Decision-Makers with Independent, Objective, Expert Scientific Analysis



WSAS serves the State of Washington and its citizens by providing expert scientific and engineering analysis to inform public policy-making. It is organized to be a premiere source of objective scientific and technological information on important issues, questions, and problems facing decision-makers. And it works to increase the role and visibility of science in the state.

Criteria for undertaking a study by WSAS include the following:

- 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- existing reports, if any, are out of date or inadequate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 all the study expenses, staff costs, and study-related overhead.

Study committee members serve without compensation.

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 scientific results provided to sponsors are of the highest quality.

Statement of Task

When a sponsor contracts with WSAS for a project, staff from the sponsor and WSAS work together to focus on the exact questions the study will answer. This step is critical for effective results. It limits the proposed information-gathering and analysis and mandates the kind of report required. It allows WSAS to determine if the project can be successfully undertaken and to decide if the request is consistent with its independent, objective, non-partisan mission.

Committee Formation

After a proposed commission has been accepted, the study committee is carefully selected. Specialists with the best expertise for the study, from both within and outside WSAS, are nominated for participation. Nominees with conflicts of interest are excluded from consideration, and throughout the project the study committee is consistently monitored for new, or apparent, conflicts of interest. The perspectives of the nominees are also carefully weighed in making the final selection in order to ensure that project reports will reflect a consensus of different but balanced viewpoints. Once constituted, the study committee membership is posted on the WSAS website.

Analysis and Report Preparation

With assistance from WSAS staff, study scientists conduct information-gathering meetings, analyze the scientific literature, assess existing reports, and examine other data needed to answer the study questions. Though some of its work may be public, the committee's deliberations are held in private in order to protect it from compromising influence as it weighs evidence and prepares the study report.

Report Review, Approval, and Publication

Draft reports are subjected to anonymous, expert peer review. Reviewers determine whether the report answers the questions for which the study was commissioned, evaluate the adequacy of the evidence adduced by the study committee, and analyze the reasoning by which the report's conclusions were reached. When the reviewers' judgments have been taken into consideration by the committee, and appropriate revisions to the report have been made, it is reviewed and approved by the WSAS Board of Directors. The final approved report is delivered to the sponsor and published on the WSAS website for public access.