

Garrett Gobin

The ecology Op Cert program is inefficient and negatively impacting operator growth in Washington state. Average turnaround time for an application is 90-120 days, sometimes even 180 days. Fees have increased exponentially, but service is poor. Emails and phone calls often go unanswered. It's difficult to have empathy and understanding for the Op Cert team when we feel excluded mailing in a paper application and waiting months with no response. My job description states that I must be an OIT within 6 months of hire and full certification within one year after that. This is impossible to uphold due to the lengthy turnaround time and an archaic paper application process. I cannot sign an affidavit until I've met the experience requirement, but then I must wait another 4-6 months to hear back? I then stay at a lower grade even though I've passed my test and fulfilled the requirements defined by Washington state legislature. Held back by ecology. Why can't we submit for multiple certifications on one application? (Group 1 upgrade and Group 2 OIT) Why is it a separate fee every time we submit? The Washington state department of health allows their operators to submit up to 3 certifications on the same application for a single fee, it is all done online. Why can't ecology join the year 2025 and do the same? It could be as easy as a carbon copy. Same state. Same goals. I do not support increasing fees without a publicly expressed promise and timeline for an overhaul that both reduces the workload on the Op Cert team and benefits operators with transparency and efficiency. If we are facing an operator shortage and increased permit stringencies in Washington state, why are we not investing in training and creating competent operators? The Op Cert program is the doorway and it's currently broken.

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