Organization
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

Project Title
Conducting research and analysis related to reducing the use of hydrofluorocarbons in utility equipment.

Organizational Background
The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) is a three-member commission appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. Our Mission is to protect the people of Washington by ensuring that investor-owned utility and transportation services are safe, available, reliable and fairly priced. Regulated businesses include electric, telecommunications, natural gas, and water. The commission also regulates in-state household movers, solid waste carriers, private ferries, and inter-city busses, as well as safety issues affecting charter buses, railroads, limousines, and nonprofit senior/handicapped transportation services. Washington State law requires that utility and transportation rates must be reasonable to customers, giving regulated companies a chance to cover legitimate costs and earn a fair profit, so they can stay in business. What is fair to the company, and at the same time fair to the people and businesses it serves, is what the commission must decide many times over. Cases are heard in a formal, legal setting, with the commission hearing evidence from all sides before issuing a decision. For most of our state’s history, private utilities and carriers providing public services usually have been monopolies. If they had been left unregulated, without the restraints of the free-market system, they would have had unchecked power over the state’s most essential services.

Project Description
The 2019 Washington legislature passed E2SHB 1112 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Section 8 of the bill requires the Washington Department of Ecology to consult with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission on a report related to reducing uses of HFCs in Washington. Evans Student Consulting would conduct background research, assisting the UTC in meeting its requirements for this component of the Clean Energy Transformation Act.

Desired Deliverable
This is an opportunity for the Evans School Student Consulting Lab to be directly involved with clean energy within the state, conduct research and analysis, identify where HFCs exist in utility equipment, and identify opportunities and possible incentives to eliminate those legacy uses of HFCs.

Key Tasks
Among the core competencies the team will demonstrate on the job include research and analysis, informative inquiries, presentations, written narratives, and working professionally with Commission staff. This is an opportunity to conduct the necessary research in the area of HFCs in utility equipment and to contribute to the Department of Ecology’s report required in the legislation. In preparing the UTC’s contribution to the Department of Ecology report, we want to be collaborative with the students in translating and synthesizing the research and analysis into the final report.