
**Technology, Energy & Communications
Committee**

SSB 5724

Brief Description: Concerning the generation of electricity from biomass energy that is a renewable resource.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy (originally sponsored by Senator Pridemore).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows any county where a public utility district provides electricity for sale within the county to construct, purchase, acquire, operate, and maintain a biomass energy generation facility.

Hearing Date: 3/18/09

Staff: Scott Richards (786-7156)

Background:

Public Utility Districts.

Public Utility Districts (PUDs) are municipal corporations authorized to provide electricity, water, and sewer service. Of the 28 operating PUDs in Washington, 23 PUDS provide electricity to their customers.

Biomass Energy Generation Facility.

Under solid waste management laws, a county may generate electricity from solid waste if necessary solid waste and air quality permits are obtained. However, it is not clear in law whether counties are authorized to generate electricity from biomass energy generation facilities.

The Energy Independence Act.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Approved by voters in 2006, the Energy Independence Act (Initiative 937) requires electric utilities with 25,000 or more customers to meet targets for energy conservation and for using eligible renewable resources.

Under Initiative 937, "biomass energy" is an eligible renewable resource if it is based on animal waste or solid organic fuels from wood, forest, or field residues, or dedicated energy crops that do not include the following: (1) wood pieces that have been treated with chemical preservatives such as creosote, pentachlorophenol, or copper-chrome-arsenic; (2) black liquor byproduct from paper production; (3) wood from old growth forests; or (4) municipal solid waste.

Summary of Bill:

Any county legislative authority where a public utility district owns and operates a plant or system for the generation, transmission, and distribution of electric energy for sale within the county may construct, purchase, acquire, operate, and maintain a facility to generate electricity from biomass energy that is a renewable resource as defined under the Energy Independence Act.

The county legislative authority has the authority to regulate and control the use, distribution, sale, and price of the electricity produced from a biomass facility.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.