

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6479

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES, FEBRUARY 7, 1992

Brief Description: Directing the development of a state hydropower development plan.

SPONSORS: Senators Thorsness and Saling

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Thorsness, Chairman; Saling, Vice Chairman; Jesernig, Roach, and Stratton.

Staff: Phil Moeller (786-7445)

Hearing Dates: February 4, 1992; February 7, 1992

BACKGROUND:

In 1987, the Legislature created a task force to examine the need for a state plan balancing a range of demands and values relating to future hydropower development in the state. In 1989, the Legislature directed that such an effort be made to develop a comprehensive state hydropower plan.

The task force was reconvened and the plan was due by March 31, 1991. A midpoint review of interested parties was specified for December 15, 1989. Shortly after the midpoint review, electric utility interests withdrew from the process, citing a lack of balance in the approach of the task force.

In addition to setting specific policy guidelines, the legislation directing the formation of the plan called for at least two categories of resource agreement areas: sensitive areas where hydropower development is likely to conflict with significant environmental values; and less sensitive areas where development will not conflict with or may enhance environmental values.

The final state comprehensive hydropower plan has yet to be delivered to the Legislature.

SUMMARY:

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) shall prepare, by December 15, 1992, the state comprehensive hydropower plan. EFSEC may consider any relevant information or data developed or obtained by the State Energy Office.

Legislation directing the hydropower task force to develop a state hydropower plan is repealed.

Appropriation: \$40,000

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 4, 1992

TESTIMONY FOR:

The Legislature should have to approve the hydropower plan because of the potential for wide policy ramifications.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

The task force is already developing the plan; the bill is not needed.

TESTIFIED: Collins Sprague, Washington Water Power; Amy Bell, WSEO; Garth Jackson, Tacoma City Light; Bob Waldo, EFSEC; Keli Covin, Hydro West Group Inc.; Tom Trulove NW Power Planning Council; Bob Crump, WA PUD Assn.; Mike Tracey, Puget Power