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SENATE BILL 6636

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State of Washington

55th Legislature

1998 Regular Session

By Senators Jacobsen, Fraser and Brown

Read first time . Referred to Committee on .

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing the impacts of climate change; and  
2 creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

5 (1) There is a growing scientific consensus that increases in  
6 atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide  
7 have altered the earth's climate system, warming the earth's surface  
8 and producing other climate changes;

9 (2) Even if concentrations of greenhouse gases are stabilized in  
10 the near future, Washington citizens and businesses will be faced with  
11 temperature and sea level changes as the earth's climate system adjusts  
12 to postindustrial greenhouse gas emissions;

13 (3) Much of the research to date on climate change takes a global  
14 perspective, while much less information is available on projected  
15 climate change impacts to smaller regions such as Washington state and  
16 the Pacific Northwest;

17 (4) Regional climate changes may have a number of major impacts,  
18 both negative and positive, to the economy and the public health and  
19 safety of Washington and the Pacific Northwest; and

1 (5) The citizens and businesses of Washington will be better  
2 positioned to adjust to these coming changes if the legislature  
3 undertakes an effort to identify what the regional climate changes are  
4 likely to be and how citizens and businesses can plan for, mitigate, or  
5 take advantage of these impending climate changes.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) There is created the joint select  
7 committee on climate change. The committee shall be comprised of six  
8 members of the house of representatives, selected by the speaker of the  
9 house, and six members of the senate, selected by the president of the  
10 senate. In making appointments to this joint select committee, the  
11 speaker shall select two members, one from each caucus, from the energy  
12 and utilities, agriculture and ecology, and natural resources  
13 committees. The president shall select two members, one from each  
14 caucus, from the energy and utilities, agriculture and environment, and  
15 natural resources and parks committees. Committee members shall select  
16 from among themselves a committee chair and vice-chair.

17 (2) The joint select committee shall survey the current state of  
18 the science regarding global climate change and associated regional  
19 climate change. The committee shall identify steps that the public and  
20 private sectors may make to plan for, mitigate, or take advantage of  
21 the effects of climate change. The committee shall also identify key  
22 areas of uncertainty and opportunities for future research. The  
23 committee's efforts shall include, but not be limited to, consideration  
24 of the following:

25 (a) Possible alterations to the hydrologic cycle, including changes  
26 in the quantity and the timing of snowfall and snowpack, rainfall,  
27 runoff, peak flows, low flows, and flooding incidences;

28 (b) Possible changes to energy supply as changes in the timing and  
29 quantity of runoff lead to changes in hydropower production  
30 capabilities and to energy demand in response to potentially warmer  
31 winters and hotter summers;

32 (c) Possible changes to the state's capability to produce  
33 agricultural commodities due to changes in temperature and  
34 precipitation patterns, growing seasons, availability and timing of  
35 flows for irrigation, and crop response to increased levels of carbon  
36 dioxide;

37 (d) Possible alterations to the state's capability to produce  
38 forest products, also due to changes in temperature, precipitation, and

1 increased carbon dioxide availability, as well as to changes in species  
2 mix as some colder areas warm and some warm areas become warmer and  
3 drier, and changes related to seedling establishment and regeneration;

4 (e) Possible impacts to the state's freshwater, marine, and  
5 salmonid fisheries, including effects of changes in lake and stream  
6 temperatures, changes in the quantity and timing of flows for fish, and  
7 changes in river and estuarine habitat due to sea level rise and  
8 changes in flooding incidences;

9 (f) Possible impacts to coastal areas and communities due to  
10 changes in sea level, changes in frequency and intensity of storms and  
11 storm surges, changes in flooding potential, and changes to coastal  
12 erosion rates and rates of saltwater intrusion into freshwater  
13 aquifers;

14 (g) Possible risks to human health and safety, including health  
15 effects associated with air and water quality changes, changes in  
16 disease patterns, and changes to drinking water availability and  
17 coastal communities associated with sea level rise; and

18 (h) An inventory of existing research efforts and funding sources,  
19 and an identification of important research subjects not currently  
20 being addressed.

21 (3) The committee shall also identify policies in place in the  
22 state that either enhance or discourage economic development  
23 opportunities for Washington companies engaged in energy efficiency and  
24 renewable energy resource industries and shall make recommendations on  
25 any policy changes needed to encourage these industries.

26 (4) In accomplishing subsections (2) and (3) of this section, the  
27 committee shall solicit input from university faculty members and other  
28 knowledgeable parties in the public, private, and public-interest  
29 sectors.

30 (5) Staffing for the committee shall be provided by senate  
31 committee services and house of representatives office of program  
32 research.

33 (6) The committee shall report its findings and recommendations to  
34 the legislature by December 1, 1998.

35 (7) The committee expires June 1, 1999.

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