

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 6560-S

April 2, 1998

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 9 and 12, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6560 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to retail electrical customers;"

ESSB 6560 establishes certain protections for consumers of electricity. It also, in section 5, directs the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to jointly study several important features of our current electric system and potential changes to our electric system.

Section 9 of the bill is technically flawed. That section would nullify the study required by section 5, unless the Legislature funds the study in the budget and specifically references section 5 by section number. The legislature did in fact fund the study in the budget, but referenced only the bill number, not the section number. I believe the Legislature intended to fund the study, and my veto of section 9 will achieve that goal.

Section 12 contains an emergency clause that would have given immediate effect to the bill. Certain provisions of the bill obligate utilities to provide new customers with a list of policies and procedures. The utilities need some time to prepare that information. Without section 12, the bill will take effect on June 11, 1998, which allows adequate preparation time.

For these reasons I have vetoed sections 9 and 12 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6560.

With the exception of sections 9 and 12, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6560 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor