

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2334

Title: An act relating to the definition of net metering system.

Brief Description: Changing electricity definitions.

Sponsors: Representatives Gombosky, DeBolt and Poulsen.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS & ENERGY

Meeting Date: January 11, 2000

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Julia Harmatz, (786-7135)

Background:

Net Metering Background: Net metering is the practice of using a single meter to measure the difference between the total generation and total consumption of electricity by customers with small generating facilities by allowing the meter to turn backward.

Net metering allows the customers to produce electricity at one time and consume it at another time. This form of energy exchange is useful for renewable energy technologies. For example, a residential customer with a small wind or photovoltaic (PV) system would produce electricity when the wind is blowing and the sun is shining and consume electricity at another time when it is needed. This banking ability affords self-generating customers more flexibility. They do not have to alter their consumption or install energy storage devices to maximize the value of their generation. They also have more latitude in sizing their generating facilities because they do not have to precisely match the load to minimize excess generation.

Net Metering defined: Net metering permits electricity customers to offset the cost and consumption of utility provided electricity with electricity generated by their own small-scale generation system. Under net metering, the customer's small generation system is connected to the utility grid, and electricity produced by the customer's system flows onto the utility grid, spinning a bi-directional electricity meter backwards. Either monthly or annually, or by the billing period, the customer will receive a credit for the excess electricity generated.

Fuel Cells defined: A fuel cell is an electrochemical device in which hydrogen and oxygen combine in a controlled manner (in contrast to combustion or explosion) to directly produce an electric current and heat.

Past Legislation: During the 1998 regular session, the legislature passed a net metering law for renewable systems.

Summary of Bill: RCW 80.60.010 contains the definitions of the terms that relate to net metering. This bill amends the definition of a net metering system to include fuel cells..

Appropriation: None

Fiscal Note: None Requested

Effective Date of Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.