

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6107

As Passed House:

April 5, 2001

Title: An act relating to geothermal energy.

Brief Description: Extending the applicability of provisions relating to geothermal energy.

Sponsors: By Senators Fraser and Morton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Technology, Telecommunications & Energy: 3/19/01, 3/30/01 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/5/01, 95-0.

- Extends the state geothermal account an additional 10 years until June 30, 2011.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS & ENERGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Crouse, Republican Co-Chair; Poulsen, Democratic Co-Chair; Casada, Republican Vice Chair; Ruderman, Democratic Vice Chair; Anderson, Berkey, Bush, B. Chandler, Cooper, DeBolt, Esser, Hunt, Linville, Mielke, Morris, Pflug, Simpson and Wood.

Staff: Pam Madson (786-7166).

Background:

In 1981 the Legislature created the state geothermal account to receive funds from federal agencies for the lease or rental of federal lands located in Washington under the federal Geothermal Steam Act of 1970. These federal lands are leased for the purpose of development and utilization of geothermal steam and associated resources. These moneys are distributed to the state in which the federal lands are located and may be appropriated by the state Legislature giving priority to those areas of the state directly impacted by the development on these lands.

The Legislature provided for the allocation of moneys distributed to the state of Washington as follows: 30 percent is distributed to the Department of Natural Resources for geothermal exploration and assessment; 30 percent is distributed to Washington State University to encourage development of geothermal energy; and 40 percent is distributed to the county in which the lands are located to mitigate impacts caused by geothermal exploration and development.

The account terminates on June 30, 2001. No funds have been distributed to the state of Washington since 1989.

Summary of Bill:

The geothermal account is extended for an additional 10 years until June 30, 2011.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill extends the life of the geothermal account. The account only receives money if there is exploration for geothermal resources on federal lands. There is a statutory formula for distribution of any money the state receives. With the changing energy situation, this form of energy may become more competitive. This state does have geothermal resources. The federal agency that has leased land in this state with the potential of geothermal resources is the U.S. Forest Service. Their policies have not encouraged development of this resource. No money has been received by the state for some time.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (Pro) Senator Karen Fraser, prime sponsor; and Dave Sjoding, WSU Energy Program.