
Technology, Telecommunications & Energy Committee

HB 2637

Brief Description: Creating the joint task force on long-term energy supply.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, Hatfield, Kessler, Anderson, Voloria, Linville, Haigh, Conway, Hunt, Schual-Berke, Wood, Simpson, Rockefeller, Jackley, Kagi and Ogden.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Joint Task Force on Long-term Energy Supply to study energy supply issues and to review the state's energy strategy and recommend specific implementation actions.

Hearing Date: 1/29/02

Staff: Pam Madson (786-7166).

Background:

Statement of state energy policy

The current statement of the state's energy policy was adopted in 1976. The policy encourages the development and use of a diverse array of energy resources emphasizing renewable resources. It seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of energy and to encourage energy conservation and elimination of wasteful and uneconomic uses of energy. Conservation includes resource recovery and recycling. In emergency energy shortages, priority is given to activities that maintain the health, safety and welfare of the public. Energy use and development must be consistent with environmental policies.

State energy strategy

In 1991, the state energy office, predecessor to the Energy Policy Division of the Office of Trade and Economic Development, was directed to develop a state energy strategy along with an advisory committee of 20 members representing industry, government, and environmental interests. The committee issued its report in 1993, including recommendations on energy use in transportation, buildings, agriculture and industry.

Recommendations also addressed energy use and protecting the environment. The former Energy Office reported biennially on the status of implementing the strategy. In the 2001 biennial report, the Energy Division indicated that "given the dramatic changes in the energy landscape since 1993,– a full examination and update of the state energy strategy was warranted.

Energy supply

The Northwest region has seen a growth in demand for electricity while at the same time has not experienced much development of new generation until very recently. The Northwest Power Planning Council's prediction of an increasing possibility of power supply problems during the next few years and the region's recent experience with unprecedented high prices in the western power markets has focused attention on the need to plan for a stable, affordable supply of energy and the ability to deliver a supply of power to consumers.

Summary of Bill:

State energy policy

The statement of the state energy policy, developed in the late 1970s, is modified as follows: (1) In developing a diverse array of energy resources, conservation and new technologies are added to renewable energy resources that must be emphasized; (2) in ensuring a sufficient supply of energy, it is recognized that consideration must be given to energy needs outside the State of Washington because of the impact that need may have on Washington's energy supply; (3) while encouraging energy conservation and eliminating wasteful uses of energy and materials, energy conservation must include resource recovery that achieves at least a doubling of previous resource utilization or 80 percent efficiency; and (4) in energy shortage emergencies, critical public health, safety and welfare activities are given priority and noncritical government functions are curtailed.

Joint task force on long-term energy supply

A joint task force on long-term energy supply is established consisting of 19 members including eight Legislators, three representatives of investor-owned utilities, one representative each from public utility districts, rural electric cooperatives, and municipal utilities, one representative from environmental organizations, two members representing energy users, and agency representatives from the Governor's office and the Office of Trade and Economic Development. The non legislative members are appointed by the Governor.

The joint task force is directed to review the state's energy strategy and report to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2002, on specific actions that can be taken to implement the state's energy strategy. Future reviews of the state's energy strategy may be performed by a similar task force appointed for that purpose.

In addition to conducting a review of the state's energy strategy, the task force, established in 2000, must also study and identify methods for the creation of new capacity in the electrical supply system in advance of critical need for electricity and identify incentives and disincentives for building new generation capacity.

The joint task force expires on July 1, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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