

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5966

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Environment, Energy & Water, February 27, 2001

Title: An act relating to transferring energy-related activities to the state energy office.

Brief Description: Transferring energy-related activities to the state energy office.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Morton, Fraser, Eide and Regala.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Water: 2/22/01, 2/27/01 [DP-WM, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Eide, Jacobsen and Patterson.

Minority Report: Do not pass.
Signed by Senators Hale, Honeyford, McDonald and Morton.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: The State Energy Office was eliminated as a state agency in 1996 and its duties transferred to various other agencies. The core functions of the office were transferred to the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED).

Summary of Bill: The State Energy Office is recreated as a separate state agency. The duties of the Energy Office are returned from the other state agencies as listed:

DCTED: The main duties of the former energy office that were transferred to the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development in 1996 are restored. Those duties include:

- (1) supervise and administer energy-related activities and advise the Governor and the Legislature with respect to energy matters affecting the state;
- (2) prepare and update contingency plans in the event of energy shortages or emergencies;
- (3) establish and maintain a central repository in state government for data on energy resources;
- (4) serve as the agency responsible for coordinating implementation of the state energy strategy;
- (5) provide support for increasing cost-effective energy conservation;
- (6) provide support for the development of cost-effective energy resources; and
- (7) provide staff and administrative assistance, space, and other support to the Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC).

The following new duties are included: promote the use and development of: (i) affordable, reliable, clean energy; (ii) energy efficiency and conservation; (iii) voluntary actions to promote energy efficiency and environmental health; (iv) scientific and technical information that promotes energy efficiency and reduced energy use; (v) sustainable and renewable energy sources; (vi) energy technologies for industry that result in energy saving investments that lower energy production costs; and (vii) technologies that will lower consumption.

WSU: The State Energy Office coordinates the following programs with Washington State University: energy education, applied research, and technology transfer.

GA: The State Energy Office assumes the responsibilities relating to energy efficiency in public buildings that currently reside with the Department of General Administration (GA). Additionally, all other duties transferred to GA in 1996, are returned to the State Energy Office.

BUILDING CODE: The State Building Code Council consults with the State Energy Office prior to the publication of proposed rules.

GOVERNOR: The Governor consults with, among others, the State Energy Office when the Governor declares an energy emergency and when areas are declared to be military impacted areas.–

DOE: The Department of Ecology (DOE) consults with the State Energy Office when implementing a plan for federally-designated nonattainment area with regards to air pollution. The department may issue grants to the State Energy Office (and WSU) for establishing programs to certify clean-fuel vehicles.

COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION: The State Commute Trip Reduction Task Force includes the director of the State Energy Office.

DOT: The Department of Transportation (DOT) consults with, among others, the State Energy Office when developing the state public transportation plan.

DOR: The State Energy Office may provide technical assistance to the Department of Revenue (DOR) for purposes of determining eligibility for cogeneration facility tax credits.

EFSEC: The State Energy Office must provide staff and administrative support to the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council. The office also has a representative appointed to the council.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2001.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: We have concerns about the bill because the bill may duplicate the current duties assigned to the Washington State University energy programs and because it may lead to the eventual transfer of those duties. The new energy office's duties should be limited solely to the programmatic aspects. The duties of inspection and audit of energy efficiencies in public buildings should remain with the Department of General Administration (GA). GA is better situated to deal with the other public agencies and their buildings and has played a successful role in implementing the current statutes. A transfer of these duties may lead to increased transactional costs.

Testified: Larry Ganders, President's Office, Washington State University (concerns); Dave Sjoding, WSU (concerns); Martin Casey, Department of General Administration; Kent Loughee, General Administration.