1544
Sponsor(s): Representatives Hudgins, Sullivan, Morris, Romero, Simpson, Ruderman, Upthegrove and Rockefeller

Brief Description: Concerning energy efficiency and renewable energy standards. Revised for 1st Substitute: Creating the diversification of electricity supply and demand management act.

HB 1544 - DIGEST

(SEE ALSO PROPOSED 1ST SUB)

Finds that: (1) The western energy crisis of 2000-2001 demonstrated the vulnerability of an energy system heavily reliant on hydropower resources and impacted by volatile gas prices;

(2) Washington electric ratepayers will benefit from resource planning and acquisition that hedges against future fuel price risk by ensuring that utilities rely on a diverse portfolio of resources to generate electricity;

(3) Renewable and efficiency resources provide local economic development opportunities and local jobs in Washington;

(4) Washington is blessed with an abundance of local renewable energy resources;

(5) Washington has a long tradition of energy policies that support energy efficiency and renewable energy development. These policies have stimulated economic development, reduced operating costs for businesses, made industries more competitive, made homes more comfortable and efficient, reduced the energy burden of low-income households, and protected the environment;

(6) Encouraging irrigators to increase the efficiency of their pumping operations will yield substantial benefits by reducing peak demands of both electricity and water supplies, improving farm economics, and maximizing use of water resources;

(7) The Washington state electricity system study, commissioned by the fifty-fifth legislature through chapter 300, Laws of 1998, confirmed that changes in the electric industry have had the unintended consequence of shortening utility planning horizons and reducing incentives for electric utilities to invest in energy conservation and new renewable energy resources;

(8) The study also found that there are significant energy conservation resources that cost the same or less than the least costly new electric generation options, and that while some nonhydroelectric renewable resources may not be cost-effective in the short term, they provide significant energy system and environmental benefits to warrant development;

(9) The study also found that investment in low-income energy services is declining and unstable, although the percent of Washington's population below the poverty level has increased and low-income households pay a significantly higher percent of their incomes for energy than nonlow-income households; and

(10) Fuel diversity, economic, and environmental benefits from renewable energy and efficiency resources accrue to the public at large, and therefore all consumers and retail suppliers have an equal obligation to support a minimum amount of these resources in

the state’s electric resource portfolio.