HOUSE BILL REPORT
HJM 4026

As Reported by House Committee On:
Technology, Energy & Communications

Brief Description: Requesting the Columbia generating station be used for the commercial production of hydrogen.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler, Takko, Newhouse, Nixon, Moeller, Grant, Morris, B. Sullivan and Woods.

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
Technology, Energy & Communications: 1/12/06, 1/13/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests the United States Congress and the Secretary of the Department of Energy to establish a project at the Columbia Generation Station to demonstrate the commercial production of hydrogen at an existing nuclear power plant.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY & COMMUNICATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by Representatives Morris, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ericks, Hankins, Hudgins, Nixon, P. Sullivan, Sump, Takko and Wallace.

Staff: Scott Richards (786-7156).

Background:

Demonstration of Hydrogen Production at Existing Nuclear Power Plants
The Energy Policy Act of 2005 calls for the Secretary of the United States Department of Energy (Secretary) to establish and provide for two projects in geographic areas that are regionally and climatically diverse to demonstrate the commercial production of hydrogen at existing nuclear power plants.

The Secretary is authorized by Congress to appropriate for the purpose of carrying out the demonstration not more than $100 million. Prior to making an award, the Secretary shall determine whether the use of existing nuclear power plants is a cost-effective means of producing hydrogen.

Columbia Generating Station

The Columbia Generating Station is a boiling water reactor that uses nuclear fission to produce heat. It is the only commercially operated nuclear power plant in the Northwest. Columbia Generating Station is licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to run for 40 years, until 2023.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature requests that the Secretary determine that the use of existing nuclear power plants is a cost-effective means of producing hydrogen.

The Legislature further requests that the Secretary provide for the establishment of a project at the Columbia Generating Station to demonstrate the commercial production of hydrogen at an existing nuclear power plant.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: This memorial supports clean base power and hydrogen production. The memorial was reviewed by the Energy Northwest Board of Directors and they support it. Nuclear energy at the Columbia Generating Station provides the opportunity to crack water into hydrogen. The hydrogen produced from this project can be used for many purposes. For example, Washington oil refineries use from 1,000 to 100,000 pounds of hydrogen daily. Oil refineries derive their hydrogen by processing natural gas. Natural gas has experienced high prices lately. Some oil refineries have expressed interest in alternative sources of hydrogen.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Haler, prime sponsor; Gary Troyer, Citizens for Medical Isotopes; and Jim Rowland, Energy Northwest.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.