
**State Government Operations &
Accountability Committee**

HB 2437

Brief Description: Providing guidelines for state-owned refueling stations.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Chase, Dunshee and Upthegrove.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Compels state agencies to offer alternative fuels when planning for renovation or construction of refueling stations.
- Requires new stations to be sited near a major highway and accessible to the public.

Hearing Date: 1/17/06

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

As early as 1980, the Legislature commenced a policy regarding the use of alternative fuels in state-owned motor vehicles. The Office of Financial Management was directed to establish policies governing passenger motor vehicles owned or operated by state agencies and the "widest possible use of gasohol and cost-effective alternative fuels." In 1989, the Department of General Administration (GA) was directed to consider the use of state vehicles to conduct field tests on alternative fuels in areas of high air pollution. The GA was also directed to explore aggregated purchases of alternative fueled vehicles with other the federal government, agencies of other states, other Washington state agencies, local governments, or private organizations.

In 1991, the Legislature stated its policy to reduce vehicle emissions and decrease dependence on petroleum-based fuels. It directed the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to identify barriers to the development of refueling stations for vehicles operating on compressed natural gas, and develop policies to remove those barriers. The UTC was to consider providing rate incentives to encourage natural gas companies to invest in the infrastructure required by refueling stations.

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 (Act) requires certain fleets to acquire alternative fuel vehicles that are capable of operating on non-petroleum fuels. Under the Act, by 2001, 75 percent of new light duty vehicle purchases made by state fleets must be alternative fuel vehicles. Light duty vehicles are, generally, passenger cars. Excluded are law enforcement, emergency, and non-road vehicles. Currently, the state motor pool fleet consists of about 1400 vehicles. Approximately 75

percent of these vehicles are flex-fuel and can be fueled by ethanol and/or gasoline. Because ethanol is not currently available in this state, the motor pool cars are fueled with gasoline.

Summary of Bill:

When state agencies plan for the renovation of a refueling station, the renovations must ensure that alternative fuels are readily available and that the station is accessible to the public. When planning for capital construction of a refueling stations, state agencies must, to the extent practicable, offer alternative fuels. In addition, new facilities should be sited near a major highway and be accessible to the public.

The GA may charge the public an amount within 15 percent of the average cost of a comparable, alternative fuel in the state. Fees collected are deposited in the Motor Vehicle Fund.

The director of the GA is required to submit two reports to the Legislature as follows:

- by December 1, 2006, on actions taken by state agencies to make alternative fuels available at existing and future refueling stations; and
- by December 1, 2010 on the progress made since the 2006 report.

The Act expires July 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2006.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.