

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6432

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Water, Energy & Environment, January 17, 2006

Title: An act relating to solar energy demonstration projects.

Brief Description: Funding solar energy demonstration projects.

Sponsors: Senators Rockefeller, Schoesler, Fraser, Pridemore, Benton, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Mulliken, and Regala.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Water, Energy & Environment: 1/11/05, 1/17/06 [DP-WM]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Poulsen, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Fraser, Honeyford, Mulliken, Pridemore and Regala.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: The National Solar Tour is sponsored by the American Solar Energy Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the use of sustainable energy. The tour features local houses and buildings displaying green building features such as solar electric, passive solar heating, solar hot water, and other energy efficiency technologies. The homes and buildings also exhibit net metering systems, off-grid systems, and systems utilizing resource conservation measures. Washington State participates in the tour and last year featured over 150 solar-sites throughout the state.

The Solar Decathlon is a national competition, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, in which teams of college and university students compete to design, build, and operate the most attractive, effective, and energy-efficient solar house powered entirely by the sun. Teams are made up of students pursuing degrees in engineering, architecture, computer science, public relations, marketing, and other disciplines.

Students from Washington State University participated in the solar competition that took place on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., last fall. The team has formed a partnership with Seattle City Light to locate the solar demonstration house in Seattle, open it to the public, and use the facility to test new solar technologies and conduct monitoring of its performance.

Summary of Bill: Three appropriations totaling \$80,000 are made to Washington State University's Energy Extension Program. The funds are allocated as follows:

\$25,000 to support the program's participation in the Northwest Solar Tour; \$30,000 to assist in the installation of a solar demonstration house in Seattle's Magnuson Park; and \$25,000 to

design and sponsor, by September 30, 2008, a Washington State solar decathlon competition, in collaboration with the University of Washington.

Appropriation: \$80,000 GF to Washington State University.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This bill is a good investment because it helps encourage education, research, and development regarding alternative sources of sustainable energy supply. The Washington State University participated in the National Solar Decathlon last fall. The WSU solar house has an R-value of 48, double that of the energy code. The house is made of recyclable and donated material; it will be available to the public with the assistance provided in this bill. A Washington State Solar Decathlon will help teach students and make affordable housing available too. The Northwest Solar Tour is an educational event held in Washington. The tour included over 150 sites in our state. The federal funds that support the tour have been reduced to zero and a small amount of funding would allow the tour to continue.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Rockefeller, prime sponsor; Mike Nelson, Washington State University, Energy Program.