

SB 6501-S.E - DIGEST

(AS OF SENATE 2ND READING 2/13/06)

Finds that: (1) Washington's dependence on energy supplied from outside the state and volatile global energy markets makes its economy and citizens vulnerable to unpredictable and high energy prices;

(2) Washington's dependence on petroleum-based fuels increases energy costs for citizens and businesses;

(3) Diesel soot from diesel engines ranks as the highest toxic air pollutant in Washington, leading to hundreds of premature deaths and increasing rates of asthmas and other lung diseases;

(4) The use of biodiesel results in significantly less air pollution than traditional diesel fuels;

(5) Improper disposal and treatment of organic waste from farms and livestock operations can have a significant negative impact on water quality;

(6) Washington has abundant supplies of organic wastes from farms that can be used for energy production and abundant farmland where crops could be grown to supplement or supplant petroleum-based fuels;

(7) The use of energy and fuel derived from these sources can help citizens and business conserve energy and reduce the use of petroleum-based fuels, would improve air and water quality in Washington, reduce environmental risks from farm wastes, create new markets for farm products, and provide new industries and jobs for Washington citizens; and

(8) The bioenergy industry is a new and developing industry that is, in part, limited by the availability of capital for the construction of facilities for converting farm and forest products into energy and fuels.

Finds that it is in the public interest to encourage the rapid adoption and use of bioenergy, to develop a viable bioenergy industry within Washington state, and to support a viable agriculture industry to grow bioenergy crops. To accomplish this, the Washington bioenergy loan program is established to stimulate the construction of facilities in Washington to generate energy from farm sources or convert organic matter into fuels.

Requires the director to report to the legislature and governor on the status of the Washington bioenergy assistance program created under this act, on or before December 1st of the years 2006, 2007, and 2009. This report must include information on the projects that have been funded, the status of these projects, and their environmental, energy savings, and job creation benefits.