

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1481

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Environment, Water & Energy, March 25, 2009

Title: An act relating to electric vehicles.

Brief Description: Regarding electric vehicles.

Sponsors: House Committee on Finance (originally sponsored by Representatives Eddy, Crouse, McCoy, Haler, Carlyle, Armstrong, Hunt, White, Dunshee, Priest, Appleton, Orwall, Rolfes, Hudgins, Hinkle, Upthegrove, Clibborn, Morrell, Ormsby, Kenney, Maxwell, Dickerson and Pedersen).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/09/09, 71-23.

Committee Activity: Environment, Water & Energy: 3/18/09, 3/25/09 [DPA, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Rockefeller, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hatfield, Marr and Ranker.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Delvin and Morton.

Staff: Jan Odano (786-7486)

Background: Electric Vehicles. Electricity can be used as a transportation fuel to power electric vehicles. Electric vehicles are propelled by an electric motor powered by rechargeable battery packs. These vehicles typically have limited energy storage capacity, which must be replenished by plugging the vehicle into an electrical source to recharge the battery.

Electricity or Biofuel Use by State Agencies. By the year 2015, all state agencies and local government subdivisions of the state must satisfy 100 percent of their fuel needs for all vessels, vehicles, and construction equipment from electricity or biofuels. If after 2015, the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) determines that the 100 percent biofuel use mandate is not practicable, then the DCTED may suspend, delay, or modify the requirement.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

State Environmental Policy Act. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires local governments and state agencies to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) if proposed legislation or other major action may have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. The responsible official has authority to make the threshold determination whether an EIS must be prepared. If it appears a probable significant adverse environmental impact may result, the proposal may be altered or its probable significant adverse impact mitigated. If this cannot be accomplished, an EIS is prepared. The EIS is limited, or scoped, to address only the matters determined to have a probable significant adverse environmental impact.

Local Governments Planning Requirements. Cities and counties must prepare plans that include elements for land use and development. Cities may regulate and restrict the location and use of buildings, structures, and land for various purposes. In addition, certain cities and counties must develop comprehensive plans and development regulations under the Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA establishes several goals to guide the development of comprehensive plans that include encouraging development in urban areas where public facilities and services exist or can be provided efficiently; reducing sprawl; encouraging efficient multimodal transportation systems based on regional priorities; protecting the environment; retaining open space and enhancing recreational opportunities; and ensuring adequate public facilities and services to support new development without diminishing service below locally established minimum standards. The GMA also recognizes the importance of rural lands and character and land use patterns should reflect the rural character.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): Puget Sound Regional Council Study. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) must seek federal or private funding related to planning for electric vehicle infrastructure deployment. These efforts should include:

- development of short-term and long-term plans for how state and local governments may include electric vehicle infrastructure in parking facilities;
- consultations with the State Building Code Council and the Department of Labor and Industries to coordinate state standards to ensure that appropriate electric circuitry may be installed to support electric vehicle infrastructure;
- consultation with the Workforce Development Council and the Higher Education Coordinating Board to ensure the development of educational and training opportunities related to electric vehicles;
- development of an implementation plan for counties over 500,000 in population to achieve 10 percent electric vehicle ready parking by December 31, 2018;
- consideration of the appropriateness of state preemption of local regulation to encourage deployment of electric vehicle infrastructure; and
- development of model ordinances and guidance for local governments for siting and installing electric vehicle infrastructure.

Any plans and recommendations developed by the PSRC must be submitted to the Legislature by December 31, 2010, or as soon as practicable after securing any federal or private funding.

Electricity or Biofuel Use by State Agencies. State agencies and local governments, to the extent practicable as determined by DCTED, must achieve 40 percent fuel usage using electricity or biofuel for publicly-owned vessels, vehicles, and construction equipment by June 1, 2013.

Charging and Battery Exchange Stations. By December 31, 2015, the state must, to the extent practicable:

- install charging outlets capable of charging electric vehicles in each of the state's fleet parking and maintenance facilities;
- install charging outlets capable of charging electric vehicles in all state-operated highway rest stops; and
- install or lease space for installation of a battery exchange and charging station in appropriate state-operated highway rest stops.

Lease of Public Property. State and local governments may lease public property for electric vehicle infrastructure.

Review Under the State Environmental Policy Act. Battery charging stations and battery exchange stations will not lose their categorically exempt status under SEPA as a result of being part of a larger proposal under the SEPA rules.

Local Regulation. Local jurisdictions' development regulations must allow electric vehicle infrastructure in all zones except residential and resource zones and critical areas. A jurisdiction may adopt and apply development regulations that do not have the effect of precluding the siting of electric vehicle infrastructure.

Tax Incentives. Electric vehicle infrastructure is exempt from leasehold excise tax.

The sale of electric vehicle batteries or the installation of electric vehicle infrastructure is exempt from retail sales and use tax.

Alternative Fuels Corridor Pilot Project. An Alternative Fuels Corridor Pilot Project is authorized for five locations in the state. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) may enter into partnership agreements with public and private entities for the use of land and facilities along state routes and within interstate highway rights-of-way.

The pilot project must:

- limit renewable fuel and vehicle technology offerings to those fuels or vehicle technologies with a forecasted demand over the next 15 years that are approved by the WSDOT;
- ensure that the site does not compete with existing retail businesses or commercial activities in the same geographic area;
- provide existing truck stop operators and truck refueling businesses with a right of first refusal over the offering of refueling services for certain types of trucks within the same geographic area as the pilot project site;

- ensure that any commercial activities at host sites do not materially affect the revenues forecast for vending operations offered by the Department of Services for the Blind; and
- regulate the internal rate of return from the partnership.

The duration of the pilot project is limited to the term of years reasonably necessary for the partnership to recover the cost of capital investments, plus the regulated internal rate of return.

The Joint Transportation Committee must evaluate the development of road use fees for vehicles that are not reliant on oil-based fuels.

The State Building Code Council and the Department of Labor and Industry must develop rules for electric vehicle infrastructure.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): Local development regulations must allow electric vehicle infrastructure as a use in all zones except residential and resources zones, and critical areas. A local jurisdiction may adopt and apply development regulations that do not have the effect of precluding the siting of electric vehicle infrastructure. The public-private partnership for electric vehicle infrastructure alternative corridor pilot project cannot compete with existing retail businesses or commercial activities. The State Building Code Council and the Department of Labor and Industries must develop rules for electric vehicle infrastructure. The Joint Transportation Committee must evaluate the development of road use fees for vehicles that are not reliant on oil based fuels.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Second Substitute House Bill: PRO: The transportation sector is the largest producer of greenhouse gases (GHG). Cleaner transportation will help reduce GHG and stop our reliance on foreign oil. There is limited production of electric vehicles and this bill would set a priority for those vehicles to come to Washington State. Cleaner fuel and transportation choices need to be available to address climate change.

CON: The land use components of the bill would allow electric vehicle infrastructure outside urban areas, areas that the state has been trying to protect. The PSRC study and the pre-emption language for rapid deployment of electric vehicle infrastructure is in conflict. There is not enough information about electric vehicle infrastructure for cities to implement the elements of this bill.

OTHER: We need to make sure that the Alternative Fuel Corridor Pilot Project does not compete with existing investments.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Eddy, prime sponsor; Mike Groesch, Clifford Traisman, Better Place; Jeff Finn, Seattle Electric Vehicle Association; Stu Clark, Department of Ecology; Deb Seymour, Gregory Johnsen, citizens; Richard King, IBEW; Tim Gugerty, city of Seattle; Park Woodworth, King County.

CON: Scott Merriman, Association of Counties; Dave William, Association of Cities.

OTHER: Ron Fuller, Department of Labor & Industries; Charlie Brown, Washington Oil Marketers Association; Greg Hanon, Western States Petroleum Association.