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SENATE BILL 5149

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senators Kline, Swecker, Rockefeller, Pflug, Fraser, Hargrove, Jarrett, Pridemore, Kohl-Welles, Schoesler, Brandland, and Shin

Read first time 01/15/09. Referred to Committee on Environment, Water & Energy.

1 AN ACT Relating to assessing the state's geothermal resources for  
2 electrical power production; and creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the Pacific  
5 Northwest has unique geological features that include significant  
6 geothermal resources, and that other states and provinces in this  
7 region are actively exploring and developing these resources for energy  
8 production purposes. The legislature further finds that existing data  
9 and analyses of these resources is now largely outdated and that  
10 advances in technology, increased energy prices, and increased interest  
11 in low-carbon energy sources has increased interest by electric  
12 utilities and independent power producers in the state's geothermal  
13 resources.

14 (2) The legislature therefore intends to authorize a comprehensive  
15 review of the state's geothermal resources and make recommendations  
16 regarding policy measures to facilitate environmentally responsible  
17 development of these resources for electric generation and concentrated  
18 heating purposes.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    (1) The geothermal resource assessment  
2 committee is created.

3        (2) The committee is composed of the following members:

4        (a) The commissioner of public lands, or the commissioner's  
5 designee;

6        (b) The energy policy division of the department of community,  
7 trade, and economic development;

8        (c) The chair of the energy facility site evaluation council;

9        (d) The state geologist within the department of natural resources;

10       (e) The chair of the utilities and transportation commission;

11       (f) Representatives of publicly owned and privately owned  
12 utilities;

13       (g) Representatives of independent power producers;

14       (h) Representatives of geologists from academic, research, and  
15 private sectors;

16       (i) Representatives of other interested sectors, including  
17 agriculture, forestry, and environmental;

18       (j) Representatives of tribal governments with significant  
19 geothermal resource interests; and

20       (k) Representatives of federal agencies with regulatory or land  
21 management responsibilities relating to the development of geothermal  
22 interests.

23       (3) The commissioner of public lands, or the commissioner's  
24 designee, shall chair the committee. The commissioner of public lands  
25 shall select the committee members described in subsection (2)(f)  
26 through (k) of this section.

27       (4) The department of natural resources shall provide necessary  
28 staff and administrative support to the committee.

29       (5) The committee shall conduct a comprehensive assessment of the  
30 geothermal resources in the state and their potential for  
31 environmentally responsible development for power production purposes.  
32 The assessment must include at least the following:

33       (a) A characterization of the geothermal resources in the state and  
34 the potential for development for electrical generation and  
35 concentrated heating purposes based upon currently employed and  
36 projected technologies;

37       (b) The economic implications of this development potential,

1 including community economic development, job creation, and state and  
2 local revenue benefits, including an assessment for each county in the  
3 state;

4 (c) A review of current lease payments on federal lands in the  
5 state for geothermal leasing, described by county;

6 (d) A review of state lands with geothermal development potential;

7 (e) A review of the effect of the state's water resource laws and  
8 policies on the development of geothermal resources; and

9 (f) Recommendations for legislative and administrative actions  
10 based upon this assessment to encourage environmentally responsible  
11 geothermal resource development in the state.

12 (6) The committee shall provide the assessment and recommendations  
13 to the energy and fiscal committees of the senate and house of  
14 representatives by December 1, 2009.

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