

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5555

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As of February 13, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to the Washington state renewable energy space heating act.

**Brief Description:** Enacting the Washington state renewable energy space heating act.

**Sponsors:** Senator Ericksen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Energy, Environment & Telecommunications: 2/14/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Staff:** William Bridges (786-7416)

**Background:** Energy Freedom Program. In 2006, the Legislature established the Energy Freedom Program to encourage the use of bioenergy and to develop a viable bioenergy industry. The program provides low-interest loans, grants, and technical assistance to successful applicants, such as subdivisions of the state, federally-recognized tribes, and certain non-profit entities.

The Energy Freedom Program was initially administered by the Department of Agriculture (WSDA) but in 2007, those duties were transferred to the Department of Commerce. Any financial agreement in place at that time continues to be serviced by WSDA. In 2009, the mission of the Energy Freedom Program was expanded to accelerate energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy improvements, and deployment of innovative energy technologies.

The Energy Freedom Program expires on June 30, 2016.

Innovative Energy Technology. Innovative energy technology is eligible for assistance under the Energy Freedom Program. This technology includes such measures as smart metering, anaerobic digesters, wave or tidal power, and high efficiency cogeneration.

Renewable Energy Improvements. Renewable energy improvements are eligible for assistance under the Energy Freedom Program. These improvements include technologies that produce energy from renewable resources, such as photovoltaic systems, solar thermal systems, small wind systems, and biomass systems.

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*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.*

**Summary of Bill:** Adding New Technologies and Measures to the Energy Freedom Program. The use of renewable energy improvements to heat buildings is added as an innovative energy technology eligible for assistance under the Energy Freedom Program. In addition, densified biomass wood fuel and associated heating appliances for the thermal heating of buildings are added as renewable energy improvements eligible for assistance under the Energy Freedom Program.

**Findings.** Among other things, the Legislature finds that pellets made from wood shavings and sawdust are a carbon-neutral, renewable, and cost-effective fuel that provide significant environmental improvements over traditional 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.