

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HR 4664

As Passed House:
February 16, 2016

Brief Description: Convening a stakeholder process regarding the financing, takeback, and recycling of certain solar modules.

Sponsors: Representative Smith.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:
None.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the House of Representatives' committee with jurisdiction on energy issues to convene a stakeholder process to develop recommendations on financing, takeback, and recycling of solar modules.

Staff: Jasmine Vasavada (786-7301).

Background:

Installations of solar energy systems in the state and globally have been rapidly increasing. This increase is attributable in part to the declining price of solar modules as economies of scale are achieved, and in part to federal and state tax preferences and feed-in-tariffs. For example, in Washington, utility customers who own and install a solar energy system on property they own are eligible to receive payments from their utility for electricity generated by the solar energy system, at above market rates. The utility in turn may claim a tax credit for the amount of payments made. House Bill 2346, which would modify and extend this tax preference for renewable energy systems including solar energy systems, includes a provision that would require the Department of Ecology to develop a solar module stewardship recycling and takeback program, applicable to modules sold in or into the state after July 1, 2016.

Since 2009 the Department of Ecology has overseen a state electronic products recycling program that provides for recycling of televisions, monitors, computers, laptops, and tablets at no direct cost to the final user. Manufacturers fund operations through payments based in

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part on each manufacturer's in-state market share. Solar modules have a life expectancy of around 25 to 30 years. Since 2014 a European Union directive has required solar module manufacturers to finance the collection and recycling of their end-of-life products.

Summary of Bill:

The House of Representatives, through its committee with jurisdiction on energy issues, shall convene and complete a stakeholder process to develop recommendations as to how to equitably ensure financing, takeback, and recycling of: (1) solar modules sold prior to July 1, 2016, in or into the state; and (2) solar modules of any manufacturer that is no longer solvent or doing business at the end of the modules' useful lives.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.