

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5091

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Energy, Environment & Telecommunications, February 3, 2015

Title: An act relating to including nuclear energy in the definition of a "qualified alternative energy resource" for the purposes of RCW 19.29A.090

Brief Description: Including nuclear energy in the definition of a "qualified alternative energy resource" for the purposes of RCW 19.29A.090.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Hewitt and Sheldon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy, Environment & Telecommunications: 1/27/15, 2/03/15 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Ericksen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Braun, Brown and Honeyford.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators McCoy, Ranking Minority Member; Cleveland and Ranker.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Habib.

Staff: William Bridges (786-7416)

Background: Voluntary Green Power Program. All electric utilities in the state, other than small electric utilities, must offer their customers the option to purchase qualified alternative energy resources. A qualified alternative energy resource is a facility that produces electricity or thermal energy from the following fuels:

- wind;
- solar energy;
- geothermal energy;
- landfill gas;
- wave or tidal action;
- wastewater treatment gas;
- qualified hydropower; and

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.

- biomass energy.

Annual Reports. Electric utilities must maintain information relating to their voluntary green power programs and make available the information to the Department of Commerce or the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, which in turn must report the information to the appropriate committees of the Legislature upon request.

Summary of Bill: Adding Nuclear Energy as a Qualified Alternative Energy Resource Under the Voluntary Green Power Program. For the purposes of the voluntary green power program, a qualified alternative energy resource includes a facility that produces electricity or thermal energy from nuclear energy.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Energy Northwest supports the inclusion of nuclear power in the green power program because it is a carbon-free resource. In 2013 nuclear energy produced 19 percent of nation's electricity and prevented 589 million metric tons of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere, which is equal to the CO₂ emitted by 113 million passenger cars. Nuclear energy accounted for 63 percent of CO₂-free electricity generation in the U.S. The carbon footprint of nuclear is slightly less than hydropower, and slightly more than wind power, and unlike wind power, nuclear power operates 95 percent of the time compared to wind's 30 percent. The energy return on investment is high for nuclear power, which is important to maintaining high living standards.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Brent Ridge, V.P., Corporate Services, Chief Financial Officer, Risk Officer, Energy NW; Carl Holder, Chair, Eastern WA Section, American Nuclear Society.