
**Technology, Energy &
Communications Committee**

HB 1057

Brief Description: Requesting information on the use of alternative fuels.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Dunshee, Wood and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires state agencies that own and operate refueling stations to provide information regarding the practical cost of offering alternative fuel to other state agencies and the public.

Hearing Date: 1/17/07

Staff: Kara Durbin (786-7133).

Background:

As early as 1980, the Legislature commenced a policy regarding the use of alternative fuels in state-owned motor vehicles. The Office of Financial Management was directed to establish policies governing passenger motor vehicles owned or operated by state agencies that would support the "widest possible use of gasohol and cost-effective alternative fuels." In 1989, the Department of General Administration (GA) was directed to consider the use of state vehicles to conduct field tests on alternative fuels in areas of high air pollution. The GA was also directed to explore aggregated purchases of alternative fueled vehicles with the federal government, agencies of other states, other Washington state agencies, local governments, or private organizations.

In 1991, the Legislature stated its policy to reduce vehicle emissions and decrease dependence on petroleum-based fuels. It directed the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to identify barriers to the development of refueling stations for vehicles operating on compressed natural gas, and to develop policies to remove those barriers. The UTC was to consider providing rate incentives to encourage natural gas companies to invest in the infrastructure required by refueling stations.

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.

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 (Act) requires certain fleets to acquire alternative fuel vehicles that are capable of operating on non-petroleum fuels. Under the Act, by 2001 75 percent of new light duty vehicle purchases made by state fleets must be alternative fuel vehicles. Light duty vehicles are, generally, passenger cars. Law enforcement, emergency, and non-road vehicles are excluded from the Act. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAAct) expanded the compliance options for states under the 1992 Act by allowing state fleets to choose a petroleum reduction path in lieu of acquiring alternative fuel vehicles.

Currently, the state motor pool fleet consists of about 1,400 vehicles. Approximately 75 percent of these vehicles are flex-fuel and can be fueled by ethanol and/or gasoline. Because ethanol is not readily available in this state, the motor pool cars are fueled with gasoline.

Summary of Bill:

State agencies must provide the following information to the Legislature by December 31, 2008:

- Which refueling sites are practicable for offering alternative fuels for use by other state agencies;
- Which refueling sites are practicable for offering alternative fuels for public use;
- Each agency's plan for renovating existing refueling stations or constructing new refueling stations and the associated costs; and
- The cost of reconfiguring existing refueling stations or constructing new refueling stations to include alternative fuels and to offer alternative fuels at those stations to other state agencies.

If a state agency concludes that it is not practicable to offer alternative fuels at a particular site, the agency must specify why it is not practicable. As part of their response, each agency must include a priority list outlining which stations would be most feasible to offer alternative fuels, as well as explaining what types of alternative fuels are feasible at each location.

For purposes of the study, alternative fuels include biodiesel, ethanol (E85), hydrogen, and liquid natural gas.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.