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**SENATE BILL 5093**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Brown, Hewitt, Mullet, and Sheldon

AN ACT Relating to creating the nuclear energy education program; and adding a new chapter to Title 80 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that:

(1) Modern life demands affordable and reliable energy and there is increasing interest in energy that is free of carbon emissions and free from historical price volatility associated with other energy resources;

(2) Nuclear energy is the leading and most reliable source of carbon-free energy in the nation and plays a crucial role in Washington's carbon-free energy mix;

(3) The nuclear energy industry, with a rich tradition of employing military veterans, provides Washington with thousands of quality, high paying jobs grounded in unparalleled scientific and technical expertise; and

(4) A proactive engagement is necessary to educate the public on the benefits of nuclear energy, such as its carbon-free energy profile, its reliability and affordability, and its importance as an incubator of a diverse and highly skilled workforce.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Consistent with the legislative findings in section 1 of this act, the legislature establishes the nuclear energy education program. The program is intended to promote the benefits of nuclear energy by educating students and science teachers in grades eight through twelve.

(2) The program shall be administered by the director of the Washington State University extension energy program. Under the program, the director shall award grants on a competitive basis to nuclear education ambassadors and to eligible science teachers attending qualified workshops on nuclear energy.

(3)(a) Grants for nuclear education ambassadors are to be used to create a pool of persons who can introduce students to nuclear science and technology through classroom visits.

(b) Grants for science teachers are to be used to assist teachers in attending qualifying workshops where they can meet nuclear professionals and learn about experiments and demonstrations suitable for their classrooms.

(4) In reviewing grant applications, scoring must be based on an evaluation of all application materials including narratives, support letters, supplementary materials, and other materials that may be requested of applicants. The director may consult with the American nuclear society or similar organizations when selecting applicants. Grants may be awarded for the full amount of a request or for a portion of a request.

(5) Applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

(a) A nuclear ambassador must exemplify the skills, motivation, and commitment to safety that is demanded in the nuclear industry. In addition, an ambassador must: (i) Be a resident of Washington; (ii) be a member of the American nuclear society; (iii) complete a background check as required by school district policy where the ambassador chooses to serve; and (iv) use materials prepared by the American nuclear society, or similar organizations, when possible; and

(b) An eligible science teacher must be: (i) Endorsed to teach one or more science classes in grade eight or higher through grade twelve; and (ii) certificated under chapter 28A.410 RCW.

(6) A qualifying workshop must be: (a) Sponsored by the American nuclear society or a United States department of energy national laboratory; (b) for science teachers in grades eight or higher through grade twelve; and (c) designed to teach matters relating to nuclear energy.

(7) Applicants for grants under the program are encouraged to do each of the following:

(a) Coordinate and collaborate with organizations and individuals engaging in similar educational, research, and development endeavors to maximize the effect of grants; and

(b) Seek matching funds, in-kind contributions, or other sources of support to supplement their proposal.

(8) Program grants may only be used to pay for the following costs:

(a) Mileage, subsistence, and lodging expenses for classroom ambassadors that are directly associated with their school visits. Reimbursed expenses must be paid at rates equivalent to reimbursements received by state employees under RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060; or

(b) Tuition, books, mileage, subsistence, and lodging expenses for certificated science teachers in grades eight through twelve who attend science workshops on nuclear energy. Reimbursed expenses must be directly associated with workshop attendance and must be paid at rates equivalent to reimbursements received by state employees under RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(9) The nuclear energy education program must be funded by state legislative appropriations and donated funds from private and public sources.

(10) The director may accept gifts, grants, or endowments from public or private sources for the program and may spend any gifts, grants, or endowments or income from public or private sources according to their terms. All funds received shall be deposited in the Washington nuclear energy education account created in section 3 of this act.

(11) Nuclear ambassadors selected under the nuclear energy education program are not employees or agents of the state or any of its political subdivisions. This section does not create any civil liability on the part of the state or any of its political subdivisions, officers, employees, or agents for the actions taken by a nuclear ambassador during the course of serving under the program.

(12) The director may adopt rules to implement the nuclear energy education program.

(13) For the purposes of this section, "director" means the director of the Washington State University extension energy program or the director's designee.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The Washington nuclear energy education account is established in the state treasury. The director of the Washington State University extension energy program or the director's designee shall deposit into the account federal grants to the state, legislative appropriations, and donated funds from private and public sources that are related to educating students in grades eight through twelve on the benefits of nuclear energy. Expenditures from the account may be used only for the purposes established in section 2 of this act and to publicize the nuclear energy education program. Only the director of the Washington State University extension energy program or the director's designee may authorize expenditures from the account.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 3 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 80 RCW.

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