
**Agriculture & Ecology
Committee**

HB 2326

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington climate and rural energy development center.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville, Romero, Lantz, Rockefeller, Cooper, Hunt, Simpson, Kagi and Ruderman.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the establishment of the Washington Climate and Rural Energy Development Center under the auspices of the Washington State University energy program to serve as a central clearinghouse for all climate change activities in the state.
- Encourages all emitters of greenhouse gases to seek mitigation of their emissions.

Hearing Date: 1/22/02

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

In 1990, the U.S. Congress passed the Global Change Research Act, establishing the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) and directing federal research agencies to coordinate a comprehensive national research program to study human-induced and natural processes of global change. The 1990 federal law also required the USGCRP to submit to Congress a national assessment to include and evaluate:

- the USGCRP's findings and scientific uncertainties associated with these findings;
- global change effects on a variety of societal and environmental factors, including the natural environment, agriculture, energy production and use, land use and water resources, transportation, human health and welfare, human social systems, and biological diversity; and

- current global change trends, human-induced and natural, and projected major trends for the next 25-100 years.

A major component of the national assessment are regional analyses involving workshops and assessments regarding potential consequences of climate change in a particular region. In 1997 a workshop was conducted for the Pacific Northwest Region or PNW (i.e., Washington, Oregon and Idaho). The PNW assessment is one of 18 regional assessments being conducted as part of the national assessment. The PNW assessment is to focus on the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of climate change, including issues such as forestry, water, marine ecosystems, coasts, agriculture and health.

The PNW assessment includes a report from the Climate Impacts Group (CIG), which is a group of scientist and policy analysts at the University of Washington. The CIG report, titled the "Impacts of Climate Change Pacific Northwest," identifies some climate change impacts, describes the modeling process for projecting climate change trends, and provides some general recommendations for future study or action.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Climate and Rural Energy Development Center (the center) is created within the auspices of the Washington State University energy program. The center is to serve as the clearinghouse for all climate change activities in Washington and is funded through grants, voluntary cash and in-kind contributions, and any fees and costs paid by emitters for the study of climate change and rural energy development.

The center is assigned numerous duties. These duties include collecting scientific and technological data related to climate change, assisting all Washington climate contingency planning, directing all available resources toward clean energy programs in depressed rural areas, studying and recommending cost-effective methods for reducing greenhouse gasses, certifying and developing methods for monitoring mitigation projects, and serving as a central registry for emissions credits trading.

The center is also responsible for reporting to the Legislature an annual update of operations and the status of greenhouse gas emissions in the state. If funds are available, the center is asked to identify key sectors that may be affected by climate change, and notify, provide information, support a collaborative response, and create contingency planning mechanisms for those sectors.

All emitters of greenhouse gases are encouraged to seek mitigation of their emissions. Upon request, and with funding, the center may assist emitters select mitigation projects, determine the amount of mitigation accomplished, and monitor mitigation projects.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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