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**Technology, Energy &  
Communications Committee**

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**SB 5383**

**Brief Description:** Modifying provisions of the energy freedom program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Hargrove, Poulsen, Hatfield, Rockefeller, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Expands the Energy Freedom Program to include assistance for wind projects owned by community action agencies.

**Hearing Date:** 3/21/07

**Staff:** Kara Durbin (786-7133).

**Background:**

Energy Freedom Program

In 2006, the Legislature created the Energy Freedom Program (Program) within the Department of Agriculture. The Program provides financial and technical assistance to public entities for: (1) the construction of facilities to convert farm products or wastes into electricity, gaseous or liquid fuels, or other co-products; and (2) the construction of facilities used to store or distribute such feedstocks or products. The amount of assistance allowed under the Program is limited to no more than 50 percent of the total cost of the project, up to \$5 million.

Eight projects were awarded assistance under the Program. Six of the projects support oilseed processing for biodiesel; two of the projects support anaerobic digestion.

Community Action Agencies

Community action agencies are organizations that work with various government agencies to assist individuals with incomes at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Services include housing, health, education, nutrition, job placement, and legal assistance. There are 31 community action agencies in the state that serve all 39 counties. Twenty-seven community

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action agencies are private not-for-profit organizations and four are publicly operated, three by county governments and one by a city government.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Energy Freedom Program is expanded to include assistance for wind power projects owned by a community action agency in the state.

The Director of the Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, may approve an award for assistance to a community action agency for a wind project only if the director finds that: (1) the project is owned by a community action agency in the state; and (2) any profits generated from the sale of the wind power are wholly used for the agency's non-profit purposes. Assistance may constitute 100 percent of the total project cost, up to \$5 million.

The extent to which a project will support a community action agency is added to the list of criteria used when prioritizing applications received under the Energy Freedom Program.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 20, 2007.

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