

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5444

As of February 6, 2015

Title: An act relating to establishing an electric vehicle infrastructure bank.

Brief Description: Establishing an electric vehicle infrastructure bank.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, Lias, Mullet, Litzow, Pedersen, Fain, Frockt, Jayapal and Habib; by request of Governor Inslee.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/04/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: As of December 31, 2014, there were 11,829 plug-in electric vehicles registered in Washington. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) reports that there are approximately 450 electric vehicle charging stations in Washington, 45 of which are DC fast chargers. The charging equipment is located primarily in the Puget Sound region, along I-5, and around Vancouver. Other than a potential new DC charging station in Moses Lake, there are currently no DC fast-charging stations east of Cle Elum along I-90.

The West Coast Electric Highway initiative has developed over the past five years. It is a network of electric vehicle fast-charging stations located every 25 to 50 miles along I-5 and other major roadways and stretches from the Canadian border to the Mexican border. There are 14 stations in Washington that are associated with the West Coast Electric Highway. Through a competitive contract award process, AeroVironment was selected to manufacture, supply, install, operate, and maintain a network of DC fast-charging stations which power an electric vehicle from zero to fully charged in less than 30 minutes. Each location also includes a Level 2 medium-speed charger, which all plug-in electric vehicles can use to top off or get a slower charge – four to seven hours to fully recharge.

Summary of Bill: An electric vehicle infrastructure bank is created. The purpose of the bank is to provide financial assistance for the installation of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations in Washington.

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.

Electric vehicle infrastructure receiving financial assistance must include both DC fast-charging and Level 1 or Level 2 charging equipment.

WSDOT must work with the Department of Commerce and experts representing local governments, public utilities, electric vehicle manufacturers, and current electric vehicle drivers when determining policies and priorities related to the deployment of the charging station locations.

WSDOT's public-private partnerships office must administer and disperse any funds deposited into the transportation innovative partnership account.

Prior to providing any financial assistance, WSDOT must submit a business plan to the transportation committees of the Legislature and to the Governor's Office.

This program expires July 1, 2025.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: There is a need for more infrastructure to support electric vehicles. The Governor supports both this bill and SB 5333. These bills will help get more electric vehicles on the road. A critical factor is the sales and use tax exemption for alternative fuel vehicles. WSDOT supports this bill. We have recently released an Electric Vehicle Action Plan, which identifies two of the most important incentives to increase electric vehicle sales – the sales and tax exemption and having a robust charging infrastructure. We support the concept of the infrastructure bank to help get more charging stations out to the public. We agree with WSDOT, but would add a third incentive that is critical: adequate signage. The Department of Commerce is ready to work with WSDOT to develop more charging stations.

More charging infrastructure is needed in this state. We think that this bill also ought to require that the new stations be networked.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; JJ McCoy, Mark Schiller, Seattle Electric Vehicle Assn.; Jeremy Smithson, EV Support, Puget Sound Solar LLC; Charles Knutson, Governor's Office; Tonia Buell, WSDOT; John Engber, WA CLEAN; Tony Usibelli, WA Dept. of Commerce, State Energy Office; Anne Smart, ChargePoint; Rebecca Johnson, Climate Solutions.