
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5149

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senate Environment, Water & Energy (originally sponsored by Senators Kline, Swecker, Rockefeller, Pflug, Fraser, Hargrove, Jarrett, Pridemore, Kohl-Welles, Schoesler, Brandland, and Shin)

READ FIRST TIME 02/11/09.

1 AN ACT Relating to assessing the state's geothermal resources; and
2 creating new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

5 (a) The Pacific Northwest has unique geologic features that include
6 significant geothermal resources;

7 (b) Other states and provinces in the region are actively exploring
8 and developing geothermal resources to produce electric power and
9 concentrated heating with varied applications;

10 (c) Existing information and analysis concerning geothermal
11 resources is insufficient; and

12 (d) Advances in technology, higher energy prices, and concerns
13 regarding use of high-carbon energy sources have raised public and
14 private sector interest in developing the state's geothermal resources.

15 (2) The legislature therefore intends to authorize the department
16 of natural resources to conduct an initial assessment of the state's
17 geothermal resources and to make recommendations regarding development
18 of these resources, in an environmentally responsible manner, for
19 electric generation and concentrated heating purposes.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of natural resources
2 shall conduct an initial assessment of geothermal resources in the
3 state.

4 (2) The initial assessment must include:

5 (a) A summary of existing information regarding the state's
6 geothermal resources;

7 (b) An estimate of the number of geothermal resources to be
8 sampled, measured, and analyzed for geothermal temperature gradient;

9 (c) A description of the regulatory framework for exploring and
10 developing geothermal resources;

11 (d) Analysis of the potential for developing geothermal resources
12 for electric generation and concentrated heating based upon current and
13 projected technologies;

14 (e) Analysis, conducted in cooperation with the Washington State
15 University extension energy program and the department of community,
16 trade, and economic development, regarding the economic implications of
17 developing geothermal resources, including community economic
18 development, job creation, and state and local revenue benefits, with
19 an assessment for each county in the state;

20 (f) Recommendations regarding legislative and administrative
21 actions deemed necessary to encourage development of geothermal
22 resources in an environmentally responsible manner; and

23 (g) Recommendations regarding a more comprehensive assessment of
24 the state's geothermal resources that may:

25 (i) Consider new measurements of equilibrium geothermal temperature
26 gradients in existing thermal water wells, particularly in the Columbia
27 river basin and the southern portion of the Cascade mountain range in
28 the state;

29 (ii) Develop predictive geologic models to guide exploration of
30 geothermal resources;

31 (iii) Conduct new sampling and analysis of hot and warm springs;

32 (iv) Make recommendations regarding the regulatory framework for
33 exploring and developing geothermal resources; and

34 (v) Describe the logistics of developing geothermal resources.

35 (3) The department of natural resources shall provide the initial
36 assessment to the energy and fiscal committees of the senate and house
37 of representatives by December 1, 2009.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The department of natural resources must
2 secure federal funding, contributions from geothermal energy interests,
3 or other nonstate sources to meet at least two-thirds of the costs
4 necessary to implement section 2 of this act. If the department is
5 unable to secure sufficient nonstate funding by August 1, 2009, the
6 department shall not implement section 2 of this act.

--- END ---