

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5769

As of February 19, 2013

Title: An act relating to adding electricity from hydroelectric generation projects with a generating capacity of thirty megawatts or less that do not impede migrating fish to the definition of an eligible renewable resource for the purposes of chapter 19.285 RCW

Brief Description: Adding electricity from hydroelectric generation projects with a generating capacity of thirty megawatts or less that do not impede migrating fish to the definition of an eligible renewable resource for the purposes of chapter 19.285 RCW.

Sponsors: Senators Chase, Ericksen and Brown.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy, Environment & Telecommunications: 2/20/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Staff: William Bridges (786-7416)

Background: Approved by voters in 2006, the Energy Independence Act, also known as Initiative 937 (I-937), requires electric utilities with 25,000 or more customers to meet targets for energy conservation and for using eligible renewable resources. Utilities that must comply with I-937 are called qualifying utilities.

Eligible Renewable Resource Targets and Compliance Dates. Each qualifying utility must use eligible renewable resources, acquire equivalent renewable energy credits, or a combination of both, to meet the following annual targets:

- at least 3 percent of its load by January 1, 2012, and each year thereafter through December 31, 2015;
- at least 9 percent of its load by January 1, 2016, and each year thereafter through December 31, 2019; and
- at least 15 percent of its load by January 1, 2020, and each year thereafter.

Load means the amount of kilowatt-hours of electricity a qualifying utility delivered to its Washington retail customers in the most recently completed year.

Eligible Renewable Resource. The term eligible renewable resource means electricity generated from a resource such as wind, solar, geothermal energy, landfill and sewage gas,

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.

wave and tidal power, and certain biodiesel fuels. In addition, an eligible renewable resource must be generated in a facility that started operating after March 31, 1999, and the facility must either be located in the Pacific Northwest or the electricity from the facility must be delivered into the state on a real-time basis.

Incremental Hydroelectricity as an Eligible Renewable Resource. Incremental electricity produced as a result of efficiency improvements to the following hydroelectric generation facilities may also count as an eligible renewable resource if the improvements do not result in new water diversions or impoundments, and the improvements were completed after March 31, 1999:

- hydroelectric generation projects owned by a qualifying utility and located in the Pacific Northwest; and
- hydroelectric generation in irrigation pipes and canals located in the Pacific Northwest.

Renewable Energy Credit (REC). An REC is a tradable certificate of proof of at least one megawatt-hour of an eligible renewable resource where the generation facility is not powered by fresh water. Under I-937, an REC represents all the nonpower attributes associated with the power. RECs can be bought and sold in the marketplace, and they may be used during the year they are acquired, the previous year, or the subsequent year.

Summary of Bill: Hydroelectricity from a project with a generating capacity of 30 megawatts or less is added as an eligible renewable resource under I-937 if it meets the following criteria: (a) the project commenced operation after 2008; (b) the project is owned by a qualifying utility; (c) the diversion and powerhouse are above a natural barrier to migrating fish; and (d) the project is outside federal wilderness areas or federal wild and scenic river corridors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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