
Environment Committee

HB 1144

Brief Description: Amending state greenhouse gas emission limits for consistency with the most recent assessment of climate change science.

Sponsors: Representatives Fitzgibbon, Ryu, Peterson, Stanford, Jinkins, Goodman, Ormsby, Fey, Pollet, Tarleton, Doglio, Farrell and Macri.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modifies state greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, moving from 25% below 1990 levels to 40% below 1990 levels by 2035, and from 50% below 1990 levels to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Hearing Date: 1/23/17

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

Federal and State Regulation of Greenhouse Gases.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) identify carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride as greenhouse gases because of their capacity to trap heat in the earth's atmosphere. Under the federal Clean Air Act, greenhouse gases are regulated as an air pollutant and are subject to several air regulations administered by the EPA. At the state level, greenhouse gases are regulated by Ecology under the state Clean Air Act.

In 2008, Washington enacted legislation that set a series of limits on the emission of greenhouse gases within the state. Ecology is responsible for monitoring and tracking the state's progress toward the emission limits.

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.

The state's current limits on the emission of greenhouse gases are:

- by 2020, overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state must be reduced to 1990 levels;
- by 2035, overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state must be reduced to 25 percent below 1990 levels; and
- by 2050, overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state must be reduced to 50 percent below 1990 levels, or 70 percent below the state's expected emissions for that year.

The 2008 legislation also required Ecology to consult with the climate impacts group at the University of Washington regarding the science on human-caused climate change, and to provide a report to the Legislature making recommendations regarding whether the greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed to be updated.

Ecology issued its most recent such report in December 2016. The report recommended the following greenhouse gas emission limits:

- by 2020, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 1990 levels;
- by 2035, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state to 40 percent below 1990 levels; and
- by 2050, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in the state to 80 percent below 1990 levels.

Summary of Bill:

Washington must limit emission of greenhouse gases to achieve the following reductions for the state:

- by 2020, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 1990 levels (no change from current law);
- by 2035, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 40% below 1990 levels (compared to current reduction of 25% below 1990 levels); and
- by 2050, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 80% below 1990 levels (compared to current reduction of 50% below 1990 levels).

The alternative targeted reduction of greenhouse gases by 2050 - to 70% below the state's expected emissions for that year - is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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