
**Technology, Telecommunications
& Energy Committee**

HB 2340

Brief Description: Regarding electrical transmission.

Sponsors: Representative Morris.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a person developing new transmission in excess of 115 kilovolts to seek site certification through EFSEC.

Hearing Date: 1/14/04

Staff: Pam Madson (786-7166).

Background:

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) was created in 1970 to provide one-stop licensing for large energy projects. Council membership includes mandatory representation from five state agencies and discretionary representation from four additional state agencies. The Council's membership may include representatives from the particular city, county, or port district where potential projects may be located.

The EFSEC's jurisdiction includes the siting of large intrastate natural gas and petroleum pipelines, electric power plants above 350 megawatts, new oil refineries, large expansions of existing facilities, and underground natural gas storage fields. For electric power plants, EFSEC's jurisdiction extends to those associated facilities that include new transmission lines that operate in excess of 200 kilovolts and are necessary to connect the plant to the Northwest power grid. Developers of energy facilities that exclusively use alternative energy resources, regardless of the size of the facility's generation capacity, may choose to use the EFSEC process to site the facility.

The EFSEC siting process generally involves six steps: (1) A potential site study followed by an application; (2) State Environmental Policy Act review; (3) review for consistency with applicable local land use laws and plans; (4) a formal adjudication on all issues related to the project; (5) certain air and water pollution discharge permitting reviews as delegated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and (6) a recommendation to the Governor who then decides whether to accept, reject, or remand the application. A certification agreement approved by the Governor preempts any other state or local regulation concerning the location, construction, and operational conditions of an energy facility.

Under the EFSEC process, the applicant is require to pay the costs of the Council in processing an application.

Summary of Bill:

A person developing new transmission lines or expanding or reconstructing existing transmission lines that operate in excess of 115 kilovolts may use the EFSEC process to obtain siting approval for the transmission lines.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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