

**HB 2645 - DIGEST**

(SUBSTITUTED FOR - SEE 2ND SUB)

Finds that: (1) Rising costs of natural gas are creating an economic hardship for Washington's small business and food processing industries.

(2) Natural gas costs are unlikely to return to historically low levels of a few years ago making investments in energy efficiency increasingly important.

(3) Washington investor-owned and consumer-owned natural gas utilities are uniquely well positioned to help small business and food processors improve the efficiency of natural gas use and reduce current and long-term energy costs.

(4) The state of Washington can assist gas utility energy efficiency efforts by providing small public utility tax credits for installation of high-efficiency equipment and processes that might not otherwise occur.