
**Technology, Energy &
Communications Committee**

HB 2538

Brief Description: Regarding hydrokinetic energy development.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist, VanDeWege, Hasegawa and Lantz.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a work group to develop the Washington State Center for Excellence in Hydrokinetic Energy.

Hearing Date: 1/16/08

Staff: Scott Richards (786-7156).

Background:

Washington has over 150 miles of ocean coastline and approximately 2,500 miles of shoreline in Puget Sound. In a 2004 survey and characterization of potential offshore wave energy sites in Washington, the Electric Power Research Institute (ERPI), rated the state with excellent offshore wave energy resources. Washington's tidal energy resource are unique in that a number of potential tidal energy sites are located near population centers, matching the resource to the load.

Washington Wave and Tidal Projects

Currently, there are eight tidal energy projects and one wave energy project under development in Washington. Tacoma Power is developing a tidal energy project located in the Tacoma Narrows and Snohomish County Public Utility District (PUD) is developing seven tidal power projects located throughout Puget Sound in Spieden Channel, San Juan Channel, Guemes Channel, Agate Pass, Rich Passage, Admiralty Inlet, and Deception Pass. Finavera Renewables is responsible for developing the sole wave energy project in Washington. It is located in the Pacific Ocean in Makah Bay in Clallam County. In December 2007, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued its first ever operating license for a wave, tidal or current energy (hydrokinetic) project in the United States to Finavera Renewables for its Makah Bay project.

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED)

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 CTED is grouped into six divisions: Community Services, Housing, Local Government, Trade & Economic Development, Public Works Board and Energy Policy. The CTED Energy Policy Division provides information and analysis to support for energy policy decision making; assists in developing energy policies and programs; ensures effective responses to energy emergencies and disruptions; and provides long-term planning to minimize the total cost of energy service.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development is required to convene and staff a public-private work group to develop the Washington State Center for Excellence (Center) in Hydrokinetic Energy.

The work group shall consist of, but not be limited to, representatives from:

- The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council;
- The Department of Natural Resources;
- The Department of Ecology;
- The Department of Fish and Wildlife;
- The Utilities and Transportation Commission;
- A wave energy company or tidal energy company, or both;
- A wave energy industry association or tidal energy industry association, or both;
- Either a state or private university researching wave energy or a state or private university researching tidal energy, or both;
- The Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission;
- An electrical utility; and
- A local government.

The work group is required to make recommendations to the Legislature on how the Center will:

- Conduct and support research and demonstration of wave and tidal energy technologies in order to facilitate the deployment and commercialization of these technologies in Washington;
- Establish and operate wave and tidal energy test ranges that allow developers to demonstrate their technologies;
- Maintain processes to assist developers in permitting;
- Collect, manage, and disseminate data necessary to assess statewide wave and tidal resources;
- Promote Washington as the optimal location for the development of and deployment of wave and tidal energy technologies;
- Assist the state and various other entities in reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Assist other forms of hydrokinetic energy technologies in addition to wave and tidal energy; and
- Coordinate with other governmental wave and tidal energy institutions and initiatives in the Pacific Northwest economic region.

In addition, the work group is to make recommendations on the governance structure of the Center and on funding sources to support the operations of the Center.

By December 1, 2008, the work group is required to report to Legislature its recommendations and to provide draft language for implementing the recommendations through legislation.

The term "hydrokinetic energy" means hydroelectric generation from ocean waves, tides, and currents; from free-flowing rivers and streams; and from water discharges.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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