
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5237

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2007 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications (originally sponsored by Senators Poulsen, Honeyford, Kohl-Welles and Keiser)

READ FIRST TIME 02/26/07.

1 AN ACT Relating to the purchase of carbon credits from entities
2 that remove methane from the environment by the generation of
3 electricity from the anaerobic decomposition of organic matter derived
4 from dairy cows in the state; adding a new section to chapter 43.19
5 RCW; and creating a new section.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that methane (CH₄) is
8 a potent greenhouse gas that is twenty times more effective than carbon
9 dioxide in trapping heat in the atmosphere. Reducing methane
10 emissions, therefore, is an effective means to reduce climate warming.
11 The legislature also finds that about sixty percent of global methane
12 emissions are human-influenced sources, such as dairy farms. While the
13 legislature cannot control all sources of human-influenced methane, it
14 can encourage the use of innovative mechanisms to control methane from
15 dairy farms located in the state.

16 The legislature declares that the state should be authorized to
17 purchase eligible carbon credits from dairy farmers in the state as an
18 incentive for them to pursue appropriate measures to control dairy
19 nutrients and their concomitant methane emissions from the environment.

1 Eligible carbon credits are related to the removal of methane from the
2 atmosphere, and are not related to the carbon benefits that come from
3 displacing other potential fossil fuel resources through electricity
4 generation, which are included in renewable energy credits. By
5 offering this financial incentive, the state may enable dairy farmers
6 to finance the development of anaerobic digesters and to produce
7 electricity at a price that may meet the avoided cost of local
8 utilities, thus benefiting dairy operations, the environment, and the
9 need for cost-effective electricity.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.19 RCW
11 to read as follows:

12 (1) Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this
13 specific purpose, the department of general administration shall
14 purchase at a negotiated price eligible carbon credits from a person,
15 firm, or corporation that removes methane from the environment by the
16 generation of electricity from biogas.

17 (2) The department shall retire and not resell the credits.

18 (3) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
19 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

20 (a) "Biogas" means the gas primarily composed of methane that is
21 produced in the state from the anaerobic decomposition of organic
22 matter derived from dairy cows in the state.

23 (b) "Eligible carbon credit" means a credit for the verified
24 reduction in the carbon dioxide equivalent of methane, and that is
25 registered with a state, national, or international trading authority
26 or exchange selected by the department of community, trade, and
27 economic development or the Washington climate and rural energy
28 development center. Eligible carbon credits are only related to the
29 removal of methane from the atmosphere, and are not related to the
30 carbon benefits that come from displacing other potential fossil fuel
31 resources through electricity generation, which are included in a
32 renewable energy credit as defined in RCW 19.285.030.

33 (c) "Carbon dioxide equivalent" has the same meaning as in RCW
34 80.70.010.

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