

HB 1610 - DIGEST

Finds that: (1) Communities across the state have natural resource-based economies and rely on the use of biomass fuels to generate electricity for use in manufacturing and to serve local residents;

(2) In 2007, citizens of the state authorized a law (chapter 19.285 RCW) requiring electric utilities that serve more than twenty-five thousand customers in Washington to obtain fifteen percent of their electricity from new renewable resources by 2020 and to meet energy conservation goals;

(3) Eight other western states have renewable energy standards, but most of those other laws, unlike chapter 19.285 RCW, allow existing biomass resources to count as renewable energy resources; and

(4) By discriminating against our state's natural assets for producing renewable energy, chapter 19.285 RCW obligates local electric utilities to acquire more expensive renewable resource technologies.

Declares that chapter 19.285 RCW should be amended to preserve our low electricity costs and its economic benefits to urban and rural communities alike, and to promote further development of the low cost, climate-friendly biomass resources that form the foundation of our present and future clean energy economy.

Allows harvesters a credit against the amount of business and occupation tax otherwise due.

Exempts the use or sale of forest derived biomass used to produce electricity, steam, heat, or biofuel from the sales and use tax.