

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5526

As of January 20, 2022

Title: An act relating to studying the global availability of lithium and rare earth minerals for battery manufacturing.

Brief Description: Studying the global availability of lithium and rare earth minerals for battery manufacturing.

Sponsors: Senators Fortunato, Padden and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Business, Financial Services & Trade: 1/20/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Commerce to submit a report to the Legislature examining the global availability of lithium and rare earth minerals used in battery manufacturing.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS, FINANCIAL SERVICES & TRADE

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

Background: Rare Earth Minerals. Rare earth minerals are necessary components in a wide range of consumer products. These products include batteries and goods such as electric and hybrid vehicles, televisions, cell phones, and computer hard drives. Lithium and cobalt are not considered rare earth minerals, but are used in battery production. Though deposits are found throughout the world, most rare earth minerals are produced for consumer products in China.

Summary of Bill: By December 31, 2023, the Department of Commerce must submit a report to the Legislature examining the global availability of lithium and rare earth minerals used in battery manufacturing. The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and the Joint

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Center for Deployment and Research in Earth Abundant Materials may be consulted in the preparation of the report.

It is the intent of the Legislature to provide sufficient funding for the report.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: A delegation from the Congo recently came to visit our state. One of their concerns was running out of lithium and cobalt, elements used in battery production. Many people are talking about running out of gas but not about these elements or rare earth minerals. Solar relies on the use of batteries that uses these elements. Many of the products we use such as cell phones are dependent on these elements.

OTHER: Auto wrecking yards would like to see one more thing added to this bill. There is nothing being done about the recycling of these batteries. Recycling could be one of the best sources of these elements and rare earth minerals. Lithium and rare earth mining is dangerous and bad for the environment. Building up our recycling of this will be helpful to everyone. Batteries are currently just sitting in wrecking yards, and they cannot be piled up because that is dangerous. We need to build this recycling infrastructure. California has had a task force on recycling these types of batteries and has looked at other issues around electric vehicles. California is about two years ahead of us on this. We shouldn't wait until there is a situation like what we had with our nuclear waste.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Phil Fortunato, Prime Sponsor.

OTHER: Jim King, Independent Business Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.