
Environment & Energy Committee

SB 5287

Brief Description: Concerning a study on the recycling of wind turbine blades.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, J., Nguyen, Hasegawa, Lovelett, Lovick, Nobles, Schoesler and Wellman.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State University Extension Energy Program to conduct a study on the feasibility of recycling wind turbine blades installed in facilities in Washington that generate electricity for customers in Washington.

Hearing Date: 3/14/23

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

According to the United States Energy Information Administration, wind power is the second-largest contributor to Washington's renewable electricity generation. As of 2021, the state had almost 3400 megawatts of wind-powered capacity. The state's largest wind farm, which came online in 2012, is along the Snake River in southeastern Washington and has a capacity of about 343 megawatts.

Wind turbine blades have an expected 20-year lifespan and are typically made of steel, plastic, and fiberglass materials. They vary in size, but a typical modern land-based wind turbine has blades over 170 feet.

Summary of Bill:

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.

The Washington State University Extension Energy Program must conduct a study on the feasibility of recycling wind turbine blades installed in facilities in Washington that generate electricity for customers in Washington.

The study must include information and recommendations on specified criteria such as:

- the cost, feasibility, and environmental impact of various disposal methods for wind turbine blades;
- considerations and options for the design of a state-managed product stewardship program; and
- the feasibility of including all wind turbine blades installed in Washington in a recycling program, including blades that are currently installed.

A report of findings must be submitted to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2023.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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