

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5287

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Environment, Energy & Technology, January 27, 2023

Title: An act relating to a study on the recycling of wind turbine blades.

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 History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Technology: 1/20/23, 1/27/23 [DP].

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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Nguyen, Chair; Lovelett, Vice Chair; MacEwen, Ranking Member; Boehnke, Lovick, Short, Trudeau and Wellman.

Staff: Angela Kleis (786-7469)

Background: According to the U.S. 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.

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.

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: 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: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

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: This bill is the culmination of over two years of work. It is designed to get important questions answered on how to responsibly recycle wind turbine blades. We need to be concerned with the total life of wind structure and recycling will be required in the future. This study is important because it includes all appropriate stakeholders and affords the opportunity to provide better direction for legislation in a coordinated manner. We are capable of conducting the study as outlined in the bill and will use appropriate expertise in order to scope and inform the effort.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jeff Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Ann Murphy, League of Women Voters of Washington; Jeff Gombosky, Renewable Northwest; James Colombo, Interim Director, WSU Energy Program.

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