

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2402

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Water, Energy & Environment, February 16, 2006

Title: An act relating to expedited processing of energy facilities and alternative energy resources under the energy facility site evaluation council.

Brief Description: Providing for expedited processing of energy facilities and alternative energy resources.

Sponsors: House Committee on Technology, Energy & Communications (originally sponsored by Representatives Morris, Hudgins and B. Sullivan).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/07/06, 93-3.

Committee Activity: Water, Energy & Environment: 2/15/06, 2/16/06 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Poulsen, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Fraser, Honeyford, Mulliken and Regala.

Staff: William Bridges (786-7424)

Background: Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council. EFSEC is the one-stop permitting and certificating authority for the siting of major energy facilities in Washington. Its jurisdiction includes the siting of large intrastate natural gas and petroleum pipelines, electric power plants above 350 megawatts, new oil refineries, and underground natural gas storage fields. EFSEC also has jurisdiction over new transmission lines that operate in excess of 200 kilovolts that are necessary to connect a power plant to the region's power grid.

Alternative Energy Resource Facilities. Developers of energy facilities that exclusively use alternative energy resources, regardless of the size of the facility's generation capacity, may choose to use the EFSEC siting process. "Alternative energy resource" includes wind, solar, geothermal, landfill gas, wave, untreated wood, and field residues.

Expedited Processing. A siting application may be expeditiously processed if the following criteria are not significant enough to warrant EFSEC's full review: (1) the environmental impact of the proposed energy facility; (2) the area potentially affected; (3) the cost and magnitude of the proposed energy facility; and (4) the degree to which the proposed energy facility represents a change in use of the proposed site. The expedited process does not apply to alternative energy resource facilities.

Summary of Bill: Expanding Expedited Processing to Alternative Energy Resource Facilities. Alternative energy resource facilities may apply for expedited processing of their siting applications.

Modifying Expedited Processing. EFSEC may expeditiously process any siting application after finding that: (1) the environmental impact of the proposed energy facility is not significant or will be mitigated to a nonsignificant level under the state environmental policy act; and (2) the project is found after a public hearing to be consistent and in compliance with municipal, county, or regional land use plans or zoning ordinances. Once an applicant has been awarded expedited processing, EFSEC is not required to commission an independent study to further measure the consequences of the proposed facility on the environment.

Including Municipal Land Use Plans and Zoning Ordinances. EFSEC must consider municipal plans and ordinances when reviewing a siting application, whether or not expedited processing is used.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The bill cleans up terminology that prevents alternative energy facilities from using the expedited process.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Rep. Morris, prime sponsor; Jim Luce, EFSEC.