

Weekly Legislative Update: **Climate Change & Energy**

Issue Team Chair: Martin Gibbins

Contact: mgibbins@lwvwa.org, (425) 361-5007

February 27, 2022

Monday is the last day for many bills to pass the fiscal committees, so we cannot know which of the bills below will survive. It's never too late to express your opinion on a bill because even if it doesn't pass in 2022, the topic is likely to reappear in 2023. Your legislators need to hear your opinion on these topics of consideration. And some of these may be **considered for floor votes** next week, so select the bill number link to open the bill information page, then select the box **Comment on this bill**. Fill in your information and verify your district, then craft your comments. They need to hear your voice to keep up the *energy on climate change*.

Priority Bills Needing Action This Week

[ESHB 1770](#) - Strengthening energy codes. This bill will create a set of building codes that reach farther than the base state building codes to reduce greenhouse gas production, but are **optional** for a county or city to implement for their region. Find details in a [summary sheet](#) from one of our coalition partners.

⚠️ **Tell your senator to vote for this bill on the Senate floor.** Select the bill number link to open the bill information page, then select the box **Comment on this bill**. Fill in your information and verify your district, then craft your comments.

Bills We Support

Updates and new information in **green text**.

[HB 1280](#) Greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the design of public facilities. According to the 2021 State Energy strategy, buildings now account for over 20% of greenhouse gas releases in our state. Taking positive and deliberate steps to transition toward clean energy sources is important to reach our legislated limits for greenhouse gas emissions. This bill makes two important updates: 1) including greenhouse gas emissions in new building life-cycle analysis, and 2) assuring renewable energy systems in building design options. **It passed the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on a vote of 8-5. The current fiscal analysis concludes no financial impact, so the next step should be referral to the Rules Committee for consideration of a floor vote.**

[HB 1619](#) - Appliance efficiency standards. Energy saved through increasing efficiency is equivalent to green energy generated, and saves money so we must continue to invest in improved appliances. We cannot depend on federal policy to take action, so the states must act and work to align regulations with other states. A substitute bill adjusted some of the exemptions, and that passed the House Committee on Environment & Energy 9 to 4, then passed the floor vote 56 to 39. It passed the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on a vote of 8-4, and was referred to the Rules Committee for consideration of a floor vote.

[HB 1623](#) – Risk assessment of power supply inadequacy events. A substitute bill adjusted reporting requirements and has bipartisan support. It requires the Department of Commerce and the Utilities and Transportation Commission to conduct additional meetings to assess energy resource adequacy plus an additional stakeholder meeting in 2022. It had no opposition testimony in hearings, although some testimony asked for additional emphasis on transmission adequacy, not just supply adequacy. It passed the House Committee on Environment & Energy unanimously. It is still on the House Floor Calendar in consideration for a vote. This bill passed out of the House 93 to 0, and passed the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology unanimously, and was referred to the Rules Committee and appears headed for the Senate floor vote calendar.

[HB 1663](#) - Reducing methane emissions from landfills. Methane releases are an increasing concern due to their 25 times greater GHG effect than CO2. The most significant source is leakage from drilling and transport, including right up to the building of use, so the most effective way to reduce releases is to phase out using methane. A smaller source is from bio material decay in landfills. This bill requires monitoring landfill leakage and to encourage elimination through capture and redirection or even flame-off because the carbon dioxide created is less harmful than the methane. A substitute bill passed the House Committee on Environment & Energy, and had a hearing in Appropriations on Feb 3. An amended bill (substitute) specified several exemptions and refined the required efficiency for diversion of the methane. This bill passed out of the House 57 to 40, and had a hearing in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on Feb 16. The bill is now scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on Feb 26 and for a vote on Feb 28.

[ESHB 1770](#) - Strengthening energy codes. This bill will create a set of building codes that reach farther than the base state building codes to reduce greenhouse gas production, but are optional for a county or city to implement for their region. Find details in a [summary sheet](#) from one of our coalition partners. This bill passed the House 51 to 47, and passed the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on a vote of 8-5 **with amendments**, primarily the deletion of requirements that new buildings must be net-zero ready. It passed the Rules Committee and is now on the Senate floor calendar in line for a vote.

HB 1792 – Green Hydrogen production. Hydrogen gas may have a significant role to play in energy storage for and alternative fuels for bridging generation service gaps and for uses difficult to electrify with current technology such as aviation and long-haul trucking. Challenges remain so success will depend on technology development. The hydrogen must be produced without fossil fuels to make progress on reducing climate change. Unanimously passed the House Committee on Environment & Energy, passed the House Committee on Finance on a 16 to 1 vote, and was referred to the Rules Committee and is on the floor calendar for a vote.

HB 1799 – Organic materials management to reduce methane. Requires waste management systems to direct more organic matter toward composting facilities, reduces legal liability in the donation of edible food, encourages development of more applications for compost products, improve standards for the labeling and color coding of compostable food-ware products, and applies additional requirements on non-compostable items. Public hearing on Jan 21 in the House Committee on Environment & Energy. An amended bill (substitute) passed the committee 8 to 5. The substitute specifies certain waivers, exemptions, and technical clarifications, mostly to accommodate the constraints of smaller jurisdictions. Definitions of organics further defined and made clear does not include biosolids. Removed requirement for non-plastic stickers on produce and made changes in color identification for serviceware. This bill passed the House 56 to 42, and had a hearing in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on Feb 17. The bill is now in Senate Ways & Means for a hearing on Feb 26 and a vote on Monday, Feb 28.

HB 1814 – Community solar projects. Enables residents, whose housing is not easily or efficiently retrofitted for solar panels, to join a community solar project installation and enjoy the benefits. It passed a vote on Feb 1 in the House Committee on Environment & Energy. A substitute bill passed the House Committee on Finance on a vote of 11 to 6, and was referred to the Rules Committee where it was placed on the House floor calendar for a vote. The substitute bill increased the caps on the allowed size of the community solar projects eligible for incentives, and increased the caps on the available funding for those caps.

HB 1988– Tax deferrals for investment projects in clean technology manufacturing, clean alternative fuels production, and renewable energy storage. Defers state and local sales and use taxes for an investment project in either qualified buildings or qualified machinery and equipment, or both, for new, renovated, or expanded manufacturing operations, including zero-emission vehicles and electricity from renewable resources; facilities that produce clean fuels; and facilities that store electricity from renewable resources. The bill passed the House Finance Committee 12 to 5, and had a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on Feb 24. Although it has not passed its originating chamber, it may be designated necessary to implement the budget (NTIB), and a new fiscal note was released on Feb 24, so it seems to remain viable for the session.

[SB 5543](#) – A zero-emission landscaping equipment transition incentive program. Fuel-powered landscaping equipment is a source of GHG release, air pollutants, and community noise. This bill proposes rebates for new, electrical-powered equipment when the fuel-powered equipment is traded in and disposed. It passed the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology, and was referred to Ways & Means. This bill had a hearing in the Senate Committee on Ways & Means Feb 17. Although the legislation cutoff date has passed, the rebates in this bill have an impact on the budget, so it may be designated necessary to implement the budget (NTIB), **but no further committee activity is scheduled.**

[SB 5722](#) - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in buildings. Greenhouse gas release from buildings, primarily in heating systems, is second only to transportation in Washington. This bill is a continuation of the clean buildings bill from 2019, and is a step toward adjusting building codes to design more new buildings, including multifamily housing, to incorporate more carbon-free energy sources. It initially requires a bench-marking period to determine opportunities and costs. This bill passed the Senate floor vote 27 to 22. **It passed the House Committee on Environment & Energy, and had a hearing in the Appropriations Committee on Feb 25.**

[SB 5842](#) – State laws that address climate change. This large (41 pages) and technical bill contains clarifications, refinements and additional elements for the Cap and Invest program, the core of the Climate Commitment Act of 2021. It sets schedules for creating and assigning allowances to energy users, and further specifies business-market competitive sensitive information that cannot be disclosed. We have no time to lose in doing our part to limit climate change. Economic reactions will change, and technologies will emerge, so we should expect annual revisions of the Climate Commitment Act and other climate programs to guide implementation toward the performance required. A substitute bill with approved amendments passed out of the Senate on a 29 to 22 vote, and moved to the House. **It passed the House Environment & Energy Committee on Feb 24, and was referred to the Rules Committee, so remains viable for the session.**

[SB 5910](#) - Accelerating the availability and use of renewable hydrogen in Washington state. Creates a statewide Office of Renewable Fuels under the Department of Commerce to focus development of new fuels based on renewable green hydrogen production, and to enable the distribution and use of the fuels. The office will coordinate efforts of government, private entities, and institutions of higher education, and will report to the Legislature on opportunities and progress. Funding is planned primarily from the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Washington is in a good position to secure this funding due to the commitment toward transitioning to all clean electricity. The bill passed the Senate 49 to 0, **and passed the House Committee on Environment & Energy on Feb 24 on a unanimous vote, and was scheduled for a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on Feb 25.**

Bills We Supported that did not pass

For bills that did not pass this session, see the [2-20-22 Report](#) for descriptions.

How You Can Be Involved

- You may express support for bills with the *Comment on this bill* feature in each bill page (select the bill number links above) and in hearings with the [online process](#). For the online process, select House or Senate then the committee and the date and time of the meeting, then follow the menus. Detailed instructions are in this week's *Legislative Newsletter*. Remember, only authorized members can speak for the League; the Issue Chairs will do that, so please leave the "Organization" box blank. A more powerful influence is many voices speaking for themselves rather than many voices speaking for the League.
Your committee hearing sign-ins are effective in showing interest and support for these issues. Sign-ins are accepted until 1 hour before the committee hearing begins.
- Local Leagues in Washington have Action Chairs who coordinate action teams. Some Local Leagues have Environment or Climate teams to take action locally. Contact your local league Action Chair to find out and join.
- You may also express your opinion on legislation with the LWVWA Issue Chairs. We will take your perspectives under consideration as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Martin Gibbins, Climate Issue Chair, mgibbins@lwvwa.org