

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

Issue Team Chair: Martin Gibbins
Contact: mgibbins@lwvwa.org, (425) 361-5007

January 30, 2022

As the session nears midpoint, many bills will not proceed due to lack of clear legislator support or lack of priority. We identify many action opportunities to ask your legislators directly for votes on our priority bills as listed in the **Action Alert** and bill descriptions below.

Priority Bills Needing Action This Week

Four important bills are up for votes this week in the House Environment & Energy Committee. Please respond to the **Action Alert** in the *Legislative Newsletter* to ask your representative on this committee to vote for these bills. See the **red letter** requests below designating the bills. This will take a bit more effort than signing in on the bills in hearings, but is an opportunity to connect with your legislator on the [committee](#).

Bills We Support

[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 regulation with other states. A substitute bill adjusted some of the exemptions, and that passed the House Committee on Environment & Energy 9 to 4 and was referred to the Rules Committee where it will be considered for a floor vote in the House. If your legislator is on the [Rules Committee](#), **now would be a good time** to [ask them](#) to pull HB 1619 to the floor for a 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 now on the House Floor Calendar in consideration for a vote.

[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 sources 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 was referred to Appropriations on Jan 24. If your representative is on the [Appropriations Committee](#), **now would be a good time** to [contact them](#) and ask for a hearing on this bill.

[HB 1682](#) – Emissions-intensive, trade-exposed businesses. This is a refinement of the Climate Commitment Act, cap and trade and invest, which will require almost continuous adjustment to maximize effectiveness and prevent unintended consequences. This bill focuses on policies and administration enterprise allowances. Our long delay in reducing the driving forces of climate change leaves us with difficult choices. Now up for a vote on Feb 1 in the House Committee on Environment & Energy. **Please respond to the Action Alert in the [Legislative Newsletter](#) to keep this bill moving.**

[HB 1767](#) – Targeted electrification through outreach and investment in system conversion. Authorizes the governing body of municipal electric utilities and public utility districts (PUDs) to adopt a targeted electrification plan, including incentives, once they establish that utility outreach and investment in the electrification of customers' end use equipment in residential and commercial buildings will provide net benefits to the utility. Passed the House Committee on Environment & Energy and is now in the Rules Committee. If you legislator is on the [Rules Committee](#), **now would be a good time** to [ask them](#) to pull HB 1767 to the floor 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 and is now in the Finance Committee.

[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. Now up for a vote on Feb 1 in the House Committee on Environment & Energy. **Please respond to the Action Alert in the [Legislative Newsletter](#) to keep this bill moving.**

[HB 1810](#) – Promoting the fair servicing and repair of digital electronic products in a safe, secure, reliable, and sustainable manner to increase access to appropriate and affordable digital products, support small businesses and jobs, and enhance digital connectivity in Washington state. Will reduce the amount of e-waste in the state by promoting the repair of digital devices. Extending the life of computers, tablets and cell phones will decrease the need for more resources, energy and transportation to manufacture new products – therefore also decreasing greenhouse gas. In addition, the availability of more used devices will make such important tools for connectivity in today’s world available to more individuals. It is scheduled for a vote on Feb 1 in Appropriations. If your representative is on the [Appropriations Committee](#), now would be a good time to [contact them](#) to tell them this is a good use of revenue and [ask them to pass the bill](#).

[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. Now up for a vote on Feb 1 in the House Committee on Environment & Energy. [Please respond to the Action Alert in the Legislative Newsletter to keep this bill moving.](#)

[HB 1896](#) – Providing for responsible environmental management of batteries: Batteries are considered Hazardous Waste --- and currently are included in residential Household Hazardous Waste programs where available. This bill would create an extended producer responsibility program to provide for the convenient and responsible recycling of portable and medium batteries in a statewide program. Ensuring the proper handling, recycling, and end-of-life management of used batteries prevents the release of toxic materials into the environment and removes materials from the waste stream that, if mishandled, may present safety concerns to workers, such as by igniting fires at solid waste handling facilities or in collection vehicles. Now up for a vote on Feb 1 in the House Committee on Environment & Energy. [Please respond to the Action Alert in the Legislative Newsletter to keep this bill moving.](#)

[SB 5492](#) – Wind turbine blade recycling. The blades of a wind turbine contain fibers of carbon and glass for strength and stiffness and a plastic binder. Unless severely damaged, they should have useful lives of 30 or more years, but the materials are difficult to recycle. Some options for repurposing may be available. The bipartisan bill directs the Department of Ecology to develop guidance for a self-directed program for manufacturers to take-back and recycle or safely dispose of the wind turbine blades. In the past, our energy systems have created unanticipated and unacknowledged problems and pollution. We must do our best to prevent that for our clean energy systems. Public hearing was held on Jan 19 in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology, but no further action is scheduled. It appears it will not move forward.

[SB 5526](#) – Studying the global availability of lithium and rare earth minerals for battery manufacturing. Concerns exist about the reliability and availability of sources for the elements

and materials required for supplying the clean energy infrastructure. This bill requires the Department of Commerce to submit a report on the global availability of lithium and rare earth minerals used in battery manufacturing. Forecasting to ensure we can execute our plans for the clean energy transition is important, and the state should maintain a grasp of limitations as well as opportunities. Also, we should avoid creating environmental damage as we extract and process the ores containing the required materials. One answer to this challenge is battery recycling, addressed in HB 1896 described above. These are [developing technologies](#) and alternatives will appear as we invest in research. This bill is scheduled for a vote in the Senate Committee on Business, Financial Services & Trade on Feb 1. We will continue to monitor this bill to ensure it supports the state's objectives for clean energy and is not used as a barrier.

[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. If your senator is on the [Ways and Means Committee](#), **now would be a good time** to [contact them](#) and ask for a hearing on this bill.

[SB 5666](#) – **Targeted small-scale fossil fuels to electricity conversions for net benefits to the utility.** This is the companion bill to HB 1767, which appears will move forward in place of this Senate bill.

[SB 5697](#) – **Renewing Washington's recycling system and reducing waste – RENEW Act.** Our waste stream affects climate and the accumulation of refuse. This bill covers product stewardship for packaging and printed paper, including recycling and reuse targets, accurate labeling provisions and requirements for post-consumer recycled content in plastic tubs, thermoform containers (e.g., clamshells), and single-use cups. It implements the top recommendations in the Department of Ecology's Plastics Study ([October 2020](#)) which was required by SB 5397 in 2019 to address our recycling crisis and the increasing amount of plastic pollution. This bill is scheduled for a vote in Environment, Energy & Technology on Feb 2. If your senator is on the [Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee](#), **now would be a good time** to [contact them](#) and ask for a hearing on this bill.

[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 step toward adjusting building codes to design more new buildings, including multifamily housing, to incorporate more carbon-free energy sources. Now scheduled for a vote in Environment, Energy & Technology on Feb 2. If your senator is on the [Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee](#), **now would be a good time** to [contact them](#) and ask for a hearing on this bill.

[SB 5732](#) – Green roofs on large commercial and multifamily buildings. Requires all new buildings 50,000 square feet or larger and designed after January 1, 2025, to cover 70 percent of the roof space with green roofing and/or solar panels, and requires a study of biosolar, agrivoltaic, and blue/green roof systems on buildings with a floor area of 10,000 to 50,000 square feet. Expected benefits include reduced storm water runoff, reduced urban heat island effect, and improved air quality. Based on testimony in the initial hearing, green roof requirements are in place around the US, but amending could clarify implementation dates and requirements for accommodating the building’s roof-top mechanical equipment. It is Scheduled for a vote in the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on Feb 2.

[SB 5744](#) / [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. Votes are scheduled for SB 5744 is in the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee on Feb 2, and for HB 1988 in the House Finance Committee on Feb 4.

[SB 5842](#) – State laws that address climate change. This bill contains clarifications, refinements and additional elements for the Cap and Invest program, the core of the Climate Commitment Act of 2021. Details are summarized in the [Senate Bill Report](#). 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. Scheduled for executive session in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology on Feb 2.

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 considerations as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Martin Gibbins, Climate Issue Chair, mgibbins@lwvwa.org