

Innovative Green Tech Legislation Advances in Washington

Brian Heaton | February 27, 2014



New legislation could make going green more affordable for local governments in Washington.

House Bill 2569 creates a self-funded loan account program where municipalities can apply for loans from the state to implement emissions reduction technology. When cities and counties pay off the debt, the funding goes back into account so that other governments can use it.

Sponsored by Rep. Mark Hargrove, R-Covington, the legislation is based on an idea tested a couple of years ago when Cummins Northwest Inc., a diesel engine manufacturer in Renton, Wash., placed a small generator on a fire engine. When the vehicle got to a location, the driver shut down the motor in favor of the generator, reducing emissions and saving fuel costs.

HB 2569's financing mechanism enables local governments to conduct similar generator installations or other diesel idle reduction measures such as electrified

parking spaces and truck stops, battery-powered systems and other projects that achieve emissions reductions.

In an interview with *Government Technology*, Hargrove explained that the savings derived from green technology can potentially lead to job creation. A portion of those savings would also be sent back to the state account to help build the fund.

“To get any money out of the budget is always a challenge,” Hargrove said. “But if there’s money being created from the savings ... it can fund things, money is returned to the account and it’s self-perpetuating.”

Moving Forward

HB 2569 passed the Washington state House of Representatives earlier this month on a 92-5 vote and is now in the Senate. Hargrove felt the bill would likely have a smooth ride to Gov. Jay Inslee’s desk, citing the environmental and financial benefits it could provide.

Getting the program up and running may be a challenge, however. The legislation doesn’t have any seed funding for the loan account to get started. Hargrove explained that was done by design and admitted the legislation could be a “two-parter” before the program gets off the ground.

Initial money to cover the administrative costs of creating the loan account may be attached to the Washington state budget. But any startup loan funding would have to come from an alternate source. Hargrove suggested that the Department of Ecology might be a candidate to help get the ball rolling, but was open to other ideas.

“I don’t think we will see money dedicated to it at this point, [but] the Department of Ecology can adjust their own [budgetary] requests,” Hargrove said. “I haven’t had that conversation with them to see if they want to jump into that yet. But I think if we can at least get the account created, we’re halfway there.”

<http://www.govtech.com/transportation/Innovative-Green-Tech-Legislation-Advances-in-Washington.html>