

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

NO. 2006 - 335

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned to:
Originator:	Caskey-Sc	9/12/2006		9/12/2006	Introduction
Division Head:				9/26/2006	Council
Dept. Head:	<i>(Signature)</i>	8-28-06			
Prosecutor:					
Purchasing/Budget:					
Executive:					

TITLE OF DOCUMENT:

Resolution declaring Whatcom County's interest in purchasing renewable energy

ATTACHMENTS:

SEPA review required? () Yes () NO	Should Clerk schedule a hearing? () Yes (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) NO
SEPA review completed? () Yes () NO	Requested Date:

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: (If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)

This resolution declares Whatcom County's interest in taking a leadership role in the promotion of sustainable energy by promoting both energy efficiency and the purchasing of renewable energy for the governmental operations of Whatcom County.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

COUNCIL ACTION:

9/12/06: Introduced
 9/26/06: Council Approved 5-1, Crawford opposed and Nelson absent Res. 2006-058 Council Amended.

Related County Contract #:	Related File Numbers:	Ordinance or Resolution Number: Res. 2006-058
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Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County's website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-058

DECLARING WHATCOM COUNTY'S INTEREST IN TAKING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY BY PROMOTING BOTH ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND PURCHASING RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS OF WHATCOM COUNTY

WHEREAS, human activities over the past 150 years have lead to a changing climate in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, present levels of carbon dioxide are higher than they have been at any time in the past 650,000 years and could by the year 2050 easily surpass the level of 500 parts per million (ppm) that is widely regarded as capable of triggering severe climate changes, without radical intervention (G. Stix, "A Climate Repair Manual," Scientific American, Sept. 2006, p. 46, 52); and

WHEREAS, every increase in carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration carries new risks, and avoiding the 50-year projection of 500 ppm would reduce the likelihood of triggering major, irreversible climate changes, such as the disappearance of the Greenland ice cap (R. Socolow & S. Pacala, "A Plan to Keep Carbon in Check," Scientific American, Sept. 2006 p. 50); and

WHEREAS, 20th century warming has contributed significantly to the observed sea-level rise through thermal expansion of seawater and widespread loss of land ice (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Climate Change 2001 Synthesis Report); and

WHEREAS, the Puget Sound region warmed at a rate substantially greater than the global warming trend – average annual temperature increased 2.3 degrees Fahrenheit during the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, almost everywhere in the Cascades snow pack has declined markedly since 1950 (this trend is consistent with global warming); and

WHEREAS, nearly every glacier in the Rocky Mountains, Cascades and Olympics has retreated during the past 50-150 years in response to warming (Puget Sound Action Team Climate Change and its Effects on Puget Sound -Report 2005); and

WHEREAS, government can play a lead role in keeping atmospheric carbon below 500 ppm by adopting energy efficient measures and programs, such as utilizing renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, the United States holds less than 5 % of the world's population but produces nearly 25 % of the carbon emissions (G. Stix, "A Climate Repair Manual," Scientific American, Sept. 2006, p. 46); and

WHEREAS, the United States has the ability to pave the way for mass commercialization of renewable energy, which would bring the cost of such renewable energy down, while increasing the environmental benefits and reducing America's dependence on fossil fuels from other nations; and

WHEREAS, stabilization of CO₂ concentrations at any level requires eventual reduction of global CO₂ net emissions to a small fraction of the current emission level; and

WHEREAS, the lower the chosen level for stabilization, the sooner the decline in global net CO₂ emissions needs to begin (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Climate Change 2001 Synthesis Report); and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County government could reduce its carbon dioxide output by 3,141 tons (which is approximately 1/3 of the county government's total output of CO2) by utilizing renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, this leadership is expected to catalyze additional efforts by the private sector within Whatcom County as well as to inspire other local governments to action; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership provides assistance and recognition to organizations that demonstrate environmental leadership by choosing green power; and

WHEREAS, Puget Sound Energy's Green Power Program offers electricity consumers the option of buying green power, which facilitates the emergence of a successful renewable energy industry; and

WHEREAS, all revenues from Puget Sound Energy's Green Power Program are reinvested in the Green Power Program as required by state law and subject to audit by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission; and

WHEREAS, Puget Sound Energy has agreed to explore dedicating a portion of the green power revenues to enhance the development of Green Power Sources here in Whatcom County, which could have the added benefit of an economic enhancement to our agricultural community; and

WHEREAS, energy conservation efforts in Whatcom County facilities over the past six years have yielded substantial savings in energy costs and these annual savings exceed the cost of buying renewable energy credits for 100% of the electricity used in Whatcom County government owned and operated facilities; and

WHEREAS, Sustainable Connections, the City of Bellingham, and Puget Sound Energy have designed the innovative Green Power Community Challenge to encourage greater awareness and participation in the purchase of Green Power.

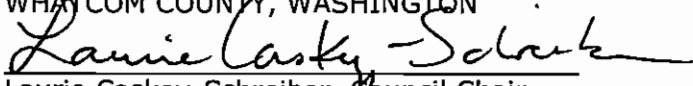
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that we support:

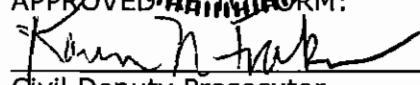
- 1) **PROMOTING THE PURCHASE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY.**
The County endorses the Green Power Community Challenge and encourages citizens of Whatcom County to participate in Puget Sound Energy's Green Power Program;
- 2) **BECOMING AN EPA GREEN POWER PARTNER.**
The County Council authorizes the Executive to enter into an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to participate in the Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership program;
- 3) **PURCHASING GREEN POWER FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL FACILITIES.**
The County shall begin purchasing renewable energy credits from Puget Sound Energy or another provider equal to 100% of electricity used in government-owned or operated facilities in 2007.

APPROVED this 16 day of September, 2006.

ATTEST:
STATE OF WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Laurie Caskey-Schreiber, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Civil Deputy Prosecutor


Pete Kremen, County Executive

Date: 9-29-06