

WA-APA Senate Hearing Testimony (Bill 5871)

On Monday, February 26, at the 10:00 am session, the Energy Element Bill - SB 5871 got a public hearing with the Government Operations and Elections Committee of the Washington State Senate. In attendance were:

- *Senator Darlene Fairley (D; District 32; Shoreline-Kenmore) (PRESIDING).*
- *Senator Adam Kline (D; District 37; Rainier Valley-Madrona, Seattle),*
- *Senator Eric Oemig, (D; District 45, east King County),*
- *Senator Craig Pridemore (D; District 49 – Vancouver),*
- *Senator Pam Roach (R; District 31st - South King County, north Pierce)*
- *Senator Dan Swecker (R; District 20 – Centralia),*

The following is a summary of the Testimony submitted by WA-APA.

Honorable Madam Chair and Members of the Committee

The Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association would like to submit that HB 5871 is consistent with the State's interest in local initiatives to control climate change and strongly support the intentions of the Bill. We also support the Bill for the following reasons:

- It allows jurisdictions to exercise local control and prudence to determine the best course of action towards climate neutrality and energy independence;
- It encourages data collection and sharing, the first step in changing behavior and influencing decision making;
- It will save money as simple steps towards energy efficiency can result in significant cost savings to counties and municipalities;
- It supports environmental stewardship;
- It allows for the State and its many jurisdictions to plan for the projected population and building growth while improving its carbon emissions and energy reliability;
- It permits Washington State to maintain its leadership in sustainable energy solutions and planning.

We feel there is opportunity and the need to tackle the issue of energy efficiency in the design and layout of communities for the following reasons:

1. A recent report published by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change concludes that it is almost certain that the phenomenon referred to as "global warming" or "climate change" has been induced by human behavior. Human behavior and choices are best manifested in the environment that they live in, that is, cities, towns and buildings. Therefore community leaders and their staff planners are in the best position to affect the climate change phenomenon.

2. About 40% of the country's energy is used for generating electricity. In addition, the current energy delivery system is steeped in inefficiencies. This can mount to 50-70% loss during generation and transmission of electricity from a plant to the end-user.

3. There is an urgent need to integrate community planning with energy delivery. The population in Washington State has been growing at about 130,000 persons a year; buildings consume about 60% of generated electricity and that 90% of our time is spent indoors. Our energy demand will only grow exponentially unless we deliberately set out

to change our course. For example, a community of 100,000 can incur savings in the order of \$500,000 annually using simple tools such as night sky lighting regulations.

4. Energy presents an economic opportunity that has been often acknowledged by this legislature. Not only incorporating new technologies but building new plants that can manufacture industrial parts and/or new fuels offer tremendous economic potential. A healthy energy industry can lead to vigorous job creation in the state. If aggressively pursued, Washington State has the potential to evolve from a net importer to a net exporter of not only energy but also technologies and skills. It has been done in Denmark and elsewhere.

5. New tools have been developed that will allow for the measure of a community's energy inventory and carbon footprint, therefore the requirements in the Bill are very much achievable and realistic.

In conclusion, we seek your support of this Bill. It will be an important step for departments and agencies to work together and be deliberate in creating energy-efficient and carbon-neutral communities. Thank you.