

Limits on Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Power Producers

The 2007 Washington Legislature approved Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6001, which Governor Chris Gregoire signed into law. ESSB 6001 directs the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) to:

- develop rules that implement an emissions performance standard for power producers that emit greenhouse gases, and
- set permitting requirements for capturing and permanently storing carbon dioxide emissions.

Carbon dioxide emissions are among the major greenhouse gases that form a heat-trapping blanket in the atmosphere, causing global temperatures to rise. Increasing temperatures trigger climate change. Limiting greenhouse gas emissions will help Washington's efforts to curb climate change.

Q: How will these rules affect climate change?

A: Power producers in Washington release about 20 percent of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. That makes them the second-largest source of such emissions, behind the transportation sector. Transportation – passenger vehicles, freight trucks, trains, ships, and aircraft – accounts for about 45 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Limiting greenhouse gas emissions from power producers will help Washington meet its targets for cutting such emissions.

Q: Who is impacted by the rules?

A: The emission performance standard applies to power producers that enter into long-term financial commitments to supply baseload electric generation (see the explanation of baseload electric generation, below). Long-term financial commitments include new ownership interest in a baseload generation operation, upgrading a facility, and signing contracts to supply power for five or more years. The emissions performance standard also applies to all new baseload electric generation facilities located in Washington that begin operating after June 30, 2008.

MORE INFORMATION

To review the proposed Ecology rule, go to http://www.ecy.wa.gov/laws-rules/activity/wac173407_218.html. To obtain a printed copy, contact Nancy Pritchett in Ecology's Air Quality Program at 360-407-6082.

To review the proposed EFSEC rule, go to <http://efsec.wa.gov/rulerev.shtml>. To obtain a printed copy, contact Allen Fiksdal at EFSEC at 360-956-2152.

You can submit public comments until 5 p.m. April 18, 2008. To submit comments to Ecology, write to Nancy Pritchett, Air Quality Program, Washington Department of Ecology, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600; e-mail npri461@ecy.wa.gov; or fax to 360-407-7534.

To submit comments to EFSEC, write to Allen Fiksdal, Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, P.O. Box 43172, Olympia, WA 98504-3172; e-mail allenf@cted.wa.gov; or fax to 360-956-2158.

Special accommodations:

If you need this publication in an alternate format, call Ecology's Air Quality Program at 360-407-6800. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

Air Quality & Water Quality Programs

Q: What is baseload electric generation ?

A: Baseload electric generation means power from plants designed and intended to produce electricity at 60 percent or more of their capacity on an annual basis.

Q: What is sequestration?

A: Sequestration means capturing and permanently storing carbon emissions so they are not released to the Earth's atmosphere. An example of sequestration is injecting carbon emissions underground. To help producers meet the emissions performance standard, the rules include methods to evaluate their required sequestration plans.

Q: When do the rules take effect?

A: Ecology and EFSEC must adopt rules by June 30, 2008. The rules will take effect 30 days after adoption.

Q: What is Ecology's role?

A: Ecology's Air Quality and Water Quality programs are developing a rule for power producers that generate less than 350 megawatts of electricity. Ecology's proposed rule includes amendments to Chapter 173-218 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). These amendments include permitting requirements to protect groundwater from being contaminated by emissions that are permanently stored underground. Also, proposed amendments to Chapter 173-407 WAC include adding new sections to implement and enforce the emissions performance standard.

Q: What is EFSEC's role?

A: EFSEC is developing a rule for power producers that generate 350 megawatts or more of electricity. EFSEC's proposed rule includes the new Chapter 463-85 WAC to implement and enforce the emissions performance standard.

Q: How can the public comment on the proposed rules?

A: Ecology and EFSEC will hold joint public hearings on their proposed rules on April 8 in Lacey and on April 10 in Spokane. Also, the agencies will accept public comments until 5 p.m. on April 18. See the box on the front page of this sheet for information on submitting comments.