



Northwest Pulp & Paper  
ASSOCIATION

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**Forest Products Groups Calls on Gov. Inslee to Sign Renewable Energy Bill**  
*ESB 5128 would boost green energy efforts in Washington state*

**OLYMPIA** — Representatives from the forest products industry today called on Gov. Jay Inslee to sign a measure that would help areas of rural Washington state provide more renewable energy under Initiative 937, the Energy Independence Act.

The bill, [Engrossed Senate Bill 5128](#), would expand Washington's Energy Independence Act by adding additional "green" energy — biomass — to the list of qualified renewables that can be used by utilities to comply with the law. Sponsored by Sens. Dean Takko, D-Longview, and Ann Rivers, R-La Center, the bipartisan bill received unanimous support in the Senate (49-0) and nearly unanimous approval in the House (91-7). The companion bill, HB 1519, was sponsored by Reps. Brian Blake, D-Aberdeen, and Jim Walsh, R-Aberdeen. The governor has 20 days to sign the measure into law from the time it reaches his desk.

Inslee vetoed a similar bill in 2016. This year's measure was modified to address some of those concerns.

Chris McCabe, executive director of the Northwest Pulp & Paper Association, said the bill makes good environmental sense at a time when more renewable energy sources are needed.

"This bill is a great way for the State of Washington to continue its leadership in developing renewable, carbon-neutral green power, while supporting small, rural, forest-dependent counties," said McCabe. "Our members have been making significant capital investments to upgrade their boilers and other

technology to make them as energy efficient as possible. And as utilities get closer and closer to 2020 and the new renewable energy targets in I-937, there will need to be more qualified renewable options,” he said.

“This bill helps utilities meet that challenge, while helping our members, who use carbon-neutral biomass to generate electricity. This is particularly important at a time when our sector faces mounting environmental regulatory challenges, including EPA’s unattainable water quality standards, and ongoing carbon tax proposals.”

Under I-937, electric utilities with 25,000 or more customers are required to meet increasing targets for green power by using qualified renewable resources. Starting Jan. 1, 2020, Washington utilities that must comply with I-937, such as the Cowlitz PUD, will have to use eligible green energy as 15 percent of its load; the current mandate is 9 percent.

ESB 5128 would help mills like Longview’s KapStone Paper and Packaging Co., as well as other pulp and paper mills and other power producers who use biomass to generate electricity.

“This bill continues Washington’s policy and tradition of recognizing biomass as carbon-neutral green power and gives utilities more green power compliance options,” said Mark Doumit, executive director of the Washington Forest Protection Association. “It really makes perfect sense to incentivize companies to become more efficient, while using renewable resources like carbon-neutral biomass.”

Mike Roberts, energy manager for KapStone’s Longview facility, says the measure would help ensure local utilities meet their renewable power goals while also maximizing the company’s commitment to clean energy.

“KapStone is proud of the investments it has made in its energy infrastructure and its efforts toward being more energy efficient,” said Roberts. “When you step back and take a look at this, everyone benefits from renewable energy — our mill, utilities, their customers and the greater community. We are especially grateful for the efforts of Sen. Takko who has championed the bill this session.

“The governor would be giving a nice environmental and economic boost to rural Washington by signing this bill, especially here in Cowlitz County which is so heavily invested in natural resources,” added Roberts. “This is a great bill for the environment in Southwest Washington and all across the state.”

**About the Northwest Pulp & Paper Association**

*Formed in 1956, the Northwest Pulp & Paper Association (NWPPA) represents 12 member companies and 14 pulp and paper mills in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. For more information, visit [www.nwpulpandpaper.org](http://www.nwpulpandpaper.org).*