

Senator Recognized for PUD Support

Sen. Curtis King of District 14, helped push legislation that increases PUD authority

The Washington Public Utility Districts Association honored Sen. Curtis King for his leadership in passage of a bill signed last July by Gov. Jay Inslee. The legislation allows public utility districts to produce and sell renewable natural gas from landfills, wastewater treatment plants, and dairy digesters for use as a transportation fuel, adding value to PUD projects and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The new PUD authority went into effect in July 2015.

The award—presented to King at the Association's January 14 meeting in Olympia—recognizes a Washington state legislator or member of Congress who has taken a leadership role in pursuing passage of WPUDA-supported legislation or preventing passage of legislation that would negatively impact PUDs. King was the prime sponsor of Senate Bill 5424 in the 2015 session. His leadership played a critical role in passage of the legislation.

The bill passed both houses of the legislature unanimously, with Rep. Norm

Johnson, also from the 14th District, providing leadership in the House to help facilitate passage of the Senate bill.

King's district includes Klickitat County, which is home to a Klickitat PUD project that uses landfill gas from the Roosevelt Regional Landfill to generate renewable electricity.

The legislation allows Klickitat PUD to expand the project to produce and sell renewable natural gas as a transportation fuel. When used as a transportation fuel, renewable natural gas replaces gasoline or diesel, lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

This new authority adds value to the PUD's project, provides a substantial source of renewable fuel in the state and reduces greenhouse gas from the transportation fleet—the single-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Washington.

The legislation opens the door for Whatcom County PUD to expand its work with dairies in the area to produce and sell renewable natural gas from dairy digesters—Whatcom County is the 10th-largest dairy-producing county in the country.

Whatcom PUD works with Western Washington University and dairies in the county to address their excess dairy gas problem by researching economical methods to convert it to renewable natural gas.

“It was with the support of Sen. King that we were able to take a good idea and develop it into good public policy,” said George Caan, executive director of the WPUDA. “We are grateful for his dedicated effort to guide this legislation through the process.” ■

The Washington PUD Association was established in 1936. Its mission is to support, protect and enhance its members' ability to conserve power and water resources for the benefit of the people of Washington and provide not-for-profit, locally controlled utility services. Visit www.wpuda.org for more information.



Dennis Bolz, left, president of the Washington PUD Association and Chelan County PUD commissioner, presents 14th District Sen. Curtis King with the Legislative Champion Award on January 14, 2016.