House committee approves lower carbon fuels standard

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(AP Photo/Ted S. Warren, File)
SEATTLE (AP) - A Washington state House committee on Tuesday approved a measure that would require fuel producers and importers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with gasoline and other transportation fuels.

Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon, a Seattle Democrat who sponsored House Bill 2338 (http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2338&Year=2017), said it's an opportunity to reduce air pollution, spur clean fuel technologies and carbon emissions from the transportation sector, which accounts for the largest share of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions.

The House environment committee passed the measure 5-4 along party lines. It now awaits a vote by the full House.

The bill would override so-called "poison pill" language that Republicans inserted into the $16.1 billion transportation package in 2015.

That provision said money for bike paths and transit would be transferred to other transportation projects if any state agency adopts a low carbon fuel standard before 2023. Gov. Jay Inslee had opposed that language but eventually agreed to it and approved the transportation package.

HB 2338 directs the Department of Ecology to adopt a clean fuels program similar to ones in California and Oregon. It would require fuel producers to reduce the carbon emissions associated with their products 10 percent below 2017 levels by 2028. The program would begin in 2020.

The carbon intensity of certain transportation fuel types would be calculated over its entire life cycle, from when it's produced and transported to when it's used in a vehicle. Fuels used by aircraft, vessels and railroad locomotives would be exempt.
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