

SENATE BILL 1268

By Bunch

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 55, Chapter 4, to authorize the issuance of new TN SOLAR POWER! specialty earmarked license plates.

WHEREAS, Energy is a big business in the United States and is close to being a big business in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee is poised to be on the forefront of the emphasis on renewable energy sources, commonly referred to as green energy; and

WHEREAS, As stated by Governor Phil Bredesen, solar power today is a growing part of the power equation. We have the pieces—the building blocks— here in Tennessee to be major players in this area. TN is already a national leader in cellulosic ethanol— which is a form of solar power. We have major industrial companies in our state with expertise and capital; Sharp in Memphis and here in Middle Tennessee, the multi-billion dollar new investments of Hemlock, which is the world's largest supplier of polycrystalline silicon – the basic raw material for solar cells; and

WHEREAS, as Governor Bredesen invited the General Assembly, the private sector, our university system, and Oak Ridge to work with together the months ahead to invent a way to become a national leader in basic solar research – to invent a solar institute. If completed, it will pay huge dividends to our state and our citizens for decades to come; and

WHEREAS, The Tennessee Energy Education Network (TEEN) develops, disseminates and implements energy education programs for K-12 schools statewide. The network provides classroom presentations, in-service training workshops for teachers, free materials, a bi-monthly newsletter, and annual contests and awards; and

WHEREAS, The Energy Efficiency Residential Construction program at Cleveland State community college was launched three years ago with a one million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and has grown significantly since then; and

WHEREAS, One hundred twenty-five students at Cleveland State community college are enrolled in a program to learn about new construction methods, solar energy, wind energy, alternative fuels and geothermal technology; and

WHEREAS, Cleveland State Community College offers the Energy Efficient Residential Construction program. This degree and certificate program will be upgraded to provide training in the proper uses of newly developed energy efficient residential construction materials and systems, and the safe and proper electric utility grid inter-tie methods for installing photovoltaic (PV) “green energy” individually generated power producing solar panels, which will provide an upgraded training program to respond to the Zero Energy Home (ZEH) residential concept. The program will incorporate the solar PV grid-tied installation certification preparation, provide experience in working with energy efficient walls made from Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs), foundation walls made from Concrete Insulated Panels (CIPs), other energy efficient construction practices, and knowledge concerning geothermal HVAC heat and air systems; all working together to meet the goal of producing the ZEH; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize and to raise awareness of the role green energy will play in the future of Tennessee's economy; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 55-4-202(c)(7), is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated subdivision:

() TN SOLAR POWER!;

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 55, Chapter 4, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated section:

(a) An owner or lessee of a motor vehicle who is a resident of Tennessee, upon complying with state motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor vehicles and paying the regular fee applicable to the motor vehicle and the fee provided for in § 55-4-203, shall be issued a TN SOLAR POWER! new specialty earmarked license plate for a motor vehicle authorized by § 55-4-210(c).

(b) The new specialty earmarked license plates provided for in this section shall contain an appropriate logo and shall be designed in consultation with officials at Cleveland State community college.

(c) The funds produced from the sale of TN SOLAR POWER! new specialty earmarked license plates shall be allocated in accordance with § 55-4-215. The percentage of funds allocated pursuant to § 55-4-215(a)(1) from the sale of TN SOLAR POWER! New specialty earmarked license plates shall be distributed in equal shares to:

(1) Tennessee Energy Education Network (TEEN); and

(2) The Energy Efficiency Residential Construction program at Cleveland State Community College, the first community college in the state of Tennessee to run a NABCEP solar certification program.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2009, the public welfare requiring it.