
Environmental Health Committee

HB 1799

Brief Description: Reducing the release of mercury into the environment.

Sponsors: Representatives Campbell, Pettigrew, Moeller, Chase and Wood.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that mercury-added lights be recycled by mid-2011.
- Prohibits the sale of bulk mercury by June 30, 2011.
- Directs the Department of Ecology to research and recommend implementation and financing methods for recycling of mercury-added general purpose lights by December 1, 2009.

Hearing Date: 2/4/09

Staff: Pam Madson (786-7111)

Background:

Mercury is a persistent, bioaccumulative toxin that can damage human central nervous and cardiovascular systems and cause environmental harm.

In 2003 the Legislature passed laws that prohibit mercury components in a number of consumer products. The law requires labeling of fluorescent lamps to indicate the presence of mercury and to inform purchasers on the proper disposal of the product.

The Department of Ecology's (DOE) Chemical Action Plan for mercury identified that a significant amount of mercury released into the environment comes from the disposal of products including fluorescent light tubes if they are improperly discarded.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

By January 1, 2011, all commercial, industrial, and retail facilities must recycle their mercury-added general purpose lights. By July 1, 2011, all state facilities, including learning institutions, must recycle their mercury-added general purpose lights.

By June 30, 2011, the sale or purchase of bulk mercury is prohibited.

Danger waste recycling facilities or treatment, storage, and disposal facilities approved by the DOE are exempt from the chapter.

By July 1, 2010, the DOE, in consultation with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, must study the feasibility of a national repository for mercury and report its recommendations and findings to the Legislature by December 1, 2010.

By December 1, 2009, the DOE, along with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, shall research and make recommendations for implementing and financing a convenient and effective mercury-added general purpose light recycling program for residents, small businesses, small government agencies, charities, and small schools in the state. Factors to be considered include:

- urban and rural challenges;
- involvement of mercury-added general purpose light manufacturers;
- financing options;
- incentives to encourage recycling;
- impacts of an approach on local governments, nonprofit organizations, and others; and
- information from existing programs.

The laws on mercury apply to crematoriums.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.