

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 2391

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*Synopsis as Enacted*

*C 14 L 92*

**Brief Description:** Regulating biomedical waste.

By House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Horn, Rust, Pruitt, Bray, J. Kohl, Brekke, Edmondson, D. Sommers, Valle and May).

House Committee on Environmental Affairs  
Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care

**Background:** There are currently no comprehensive state laws governing the definition, handling, storage, or disposal of medical waste.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) has adopted rules requiring persons collecting "sharps" waste, which consists of hypodermic needles and scalpels, and untreated biomedical waste, to plan for and implement a number of procedures designed to protect workers from infection. The rules also require sharps waste and untreated biomedical waste to be contained in a way that reduces the risk of disease transmission to persons who handle the waste. The UTC rules do not impose any such requirements on treated biomedical waste. The UTC rules apply to all private companies that offer the service of collecting biomedical waste.

Some local governments regulate biomedical waste through local ordinances. At least one county, King County, assesses higher landfill charges for biomedical waste to pay for special handling procedures required in King County.

Biomedical waste is typically sterilized through incineration or exposure to heat. Several new technologies are being developed to treat biomedical waste. Operators of a treatment facility to be located in Morton, Washington plan to use microwaves to treat biomedical waste. The state has no procedures to verify the effectiveness of these new technologies.

**Summary:** The term "biomedical waste" is defined. The definition preempts any local definitions of such waste. The Department of Health, in conjunction with the Department of Ecology and local health jurisdictions, are authorized to

develop a process to verify the effectiveness of new technologies to treat biomedical waste.

***Votes on Final Passage:***

House	92	0
Senate	46	0

***Effective:***            June 11, 1992  
                              March 20, 1992 (Sections 2 and 3)  
                              October 1, 1992 (Section 4)