

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1457

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,
FEBRUARY 24, 1992

Brief Description: Prohibiting additives for on-site sewage disposal systems.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Haugen, Wilson and Zellinsky)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Metcalf, Chairman; Oke, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Barr, Conner, Owen, Snyder, Sumner, and Sutherland.

Staff: Ats Kiuchi (786-7708)

Hearing Dates: February 24, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Products are being offered to home owners with on-site sewage systems (septic tanks and drainfields) for the purpose of controlling odors and to reduce the frequency for pumping out the accumulated sludge.

These additives generally contain chlorinated organic solvents, strong acids or bases, or nutrient supplements intended to enhance bacterial growth.

Some of these additives are ineffective and may be harmful according to recent studies. The additives may damage drainfields and could contribute to groundwater contamination.

The Department of Health is developing rules for the use of additives for on-site systems. These rules, in part, ban the use of additives containing acids, bases, and chlorinated organic solvents. The proposed rules do not ban the sale or distribution of such additives.

SUMMARY:

After July 1, 1992, the sale, use and distribution of septic tank additives are prohibited unless the product is approved by the Department of Health. A product evaluation fee may be charged by the department. A \$50 civil penalty is established. The department and local health jurisdictions shall warn retailers and distributors prior to issuing a civil penalty.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 13, 1992

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENTS:

The Department of Health shall approve systems for the alternative methods of effluent disposal.

After January 1, 1993, a person may not use, sell or distribute additives for on-site systems unless the product has been approved by the Department of Health.

TESTIMONY FOR:

Approval of these additives to on-site systems by the Health Department will protect consumers as well as prevent contamination to surface and groundwaters.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Mary Margaret Haugen, prime sponsor;
Karen Van Dusen, Dept. of Health (pro)