

SENATE BILL REPORT

HJM 4007

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES, APRIL 5, 1991

Brief Description: Concerning the study of electric and magnetic fields.

SPONSORS: Representatives Hine, Grant, Holland, G. Fisher, Forner, Braddock, Heavey, Prentice, Leonard, Valle, Kremen, Fuhrman, Morton, Spanel and Anderson.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Thorsness, Chairman; Saling, Vice Chairman; Jesernig, Nelson, Patterson, Roach, Stratton, Sutherland, and Williams.

Staff: Dave Monthie (786-7198)

Hearing Dates: April 4, 1991; April 5, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Electric and magnetic fields surround any electric current flow. This fact has been known for perhaps a century, but only within the last two decades has there been serious concern about health hazards from these fields. Despite considerable effort, scientific research has not been able to demonstrate conclusively whether there is a health hazard from the fields. A number of major studies are currently underway, and the need for additional research was identified by the EPA in an October, 1990 draft report.

Public interest in the problem has grown tremendously over the past three years. Some states have passed legislation relative to electric and magnetic fields, establishing maximum limits at certain distances from power lines. Other states have deferred any such action until further studies are complete.

SUMMARY:

The President of the United States, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the state congressional delegation are urged to spend more on, and accelerate the pace of, national research on health effects from electric and magnetic fields. An independent advisory board, consisting of officials from federal agencies, state health departments, and public utility commissioners, is requested to oversee the research.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

There is a need for additional data on electric and magnetic fields that is free of potential bias.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Lorraine Hine, prime sponsor (pro);
Virginia Wilhelmi, CAOPL (pro); Terry Oxley, Puget Power (pro)