

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5261

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 12, 1991

Brief Description: Requiring new schools to have automatic fire equipment.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Bailey, Vognild, McMullen, Newhouse, Madsen, Oke, Rinehart and Conner).

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5261 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Anderson, Metcalf, Murray, Oke, Pelz, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

Staff: Susan Mosborg (786-7439)

Hearing Dates: February 27, 1991; February 28, 1991

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CAPITAL FACILITIES & FINANCING

BACKGROUND:

During the past decade, fires have caused over \$10 million worth of damage to public school facilities in the state. Currently, the State Building Code requires that schools have sprinkler systems only in enclosed spaces below stairways and in basements larger than 1500 square feet. In addition, four counties (King, Kitsap, Thurston and Clark) require sprinklers in all buildings larger than a specified size (10,000 to 12,000 square feet).

SUMMARY:

School buildings constructed after July 1, 1992, must be equipped with an automatic fire-extinguishing system. The requirement does not apply to school buildings used by less than 50 people for less than 12 hours per week or four hours in any one day. The requirement also does not apply if the building's construction permit was applied for before the effective date of this act.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Sprinkler systems will not only protect school facilities, but will prevent disruption to student life.

The cost of the sprinkler systems will be offset by savings from reduced fire loss and likely savings in the districts' fire insurance premiums.

Architects can minimize the cost of sprinkler systems. Including a sprinkler system allows design tradeoffs such as reduced fire walls, greater distance to exits, and reduced fire flow (water capacity to fight fire).

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Dwayne Slate, Washington State School Directors' Association; Otto Jensen, Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs; Paul O'Connor, Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board of Puget Sound; Dwight Van Zanen, King County Fire District No. 43

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

The Building Code Council shall adopt rules by December 1, 1991, requiring that all new school buildings, except portable school classrooms, be provided with an automatic fire-extinguishing system.

The council shall ensure the proposed rules are reviewed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, and the Fire Protection Policy Board.

The rules shall be effective on July 1, 1992.

Authority for school construction standards for fire safety is transferred from the Director of Fire Safety to the State Building Code Council.