

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5345**

**AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 17, 1992**

**Brief Description:** Allowing self-insured employers to close disability claims after July 1990.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Matson, Owen, Anderson, Gaspard, McCaslin, Stratton, Newhouse, Moore, Oke and Murray.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Matson, Chairman; Anderson, Vice Chairman; Bluechel, McCaslin, McDonald, Moore, and Skratek.

**Staff:** Dave Cheal (786-7576)

**Hearing Dates:** February 12, 1991; February 26, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

During the period between June 30, 1986 and July 1, 1990 self-insurers were allowed to close certain workers' compensation claims without the involvement or any supervision from the Department of Labor and Industries. These claims were ones that involved medical treatment and/or temporary disability compensation (time loss), claims in which there was no controversy requiring department intervention, and where the worker had returned to work with the self-insured employer of record.

**SUMMARY:**

The July 1, 1990 "sunset" date is removed from the authority of self-insurers to close claims which involve only medical treatment and/or temporary time loss, which are not contested, and in which the injured worker has returned to work with the self-insured employer of record.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Self-insurers performed this function for four years and, according to a Department of Labor and Industries review, did a commendable job. Giving self-insurers this authority will free up department staff for other, more important matters.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

Self-insurers should not have any expanded claims management authority.

**TESTIFIED:** Dawn Yeager, Weyerhaeuser (pro); Larry Writer, Puget Sound Truck Lines (pro); Dennis Martin, WA State Trial Lawyers (con); Clif Finch, Assn. of WA Business (pro)