

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5846**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,  
MARCH 5, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Creating the sludge task force.

**SPONSORS:** Senator Roach.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5846 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Oke, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Conner, Owen, Patterson, Snyder, and Sutherland.

**Staff:** Atsushi Kiuchi (786-7708)

**Hearing Dates:** March 5, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Conventionally treated municipal sewage sludge is applied on land to enrich the soil and stimulate growth of plants. Concerns have been raised regarding the potential for harmful effects of sludge on public health and the environment.

A "Citizens' Summit" was held in 1990 to respond to growing public concerns over sludge management practices. One of the major concerns of the conference attendees was alternative technologies to current land disposal practices.

**SUMMARY:**

A ten-member Sludge Task Force is formed to study alternatives to land application or disposal of conventionally treated sludge. The task force shall conduct a literature search on current and proposed alternatives to sludge treatment and end-use technologies.

Priorities for study include: glassification, incineration, sterilization, chemical stabilization and composting.

A list of commercially available end-use products containing sludge or treatment residues shall be developed. The list shall include building materials, soil enrichment, land cover or paving materials.

Task force membership shall include: a representative from Department of Ecology, Department of Health, Department of Natural Resources, Puget Sound Water Quality Authority, Association of Washington Cities, Washington Association of Counties, Regional Sludge Management Committee and State

Association of Sewer Districts; and two public members representing the environmental community.

A pilot project to test the task force's selected priority use shall be completed by December 1, 1993. The results of the pilot project shall be reported to the Legislature by July 1, 1994.

A moratorium on land application of conventionally treated municipal sludge shall apply from the effective date of the act until July 1, 1994.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

The task force study is to include, but not be limited to, studies of glassification, incineration, sterilization, chemical stabilization and composting.

Task force membership shall include an equal number of representatives from the following interest groups: generators/applicators, environmentalists/regulators and timber/agriculture selected from agencies and organizations.

The moratorium on land application of sludge until July 1, 1994 is stricken.

The Department of Ecology shall consult with a member of the scientific community knowledgeable on sludge management to assist the task force.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested February 26, 1991

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

There has been little progress by both the generators and regulators of sludge. There is no public involvement or community consideration by the generators into the decisions regarding sludge application sites. In eastern Washington, sludge is being applied without the knowledge or approval of wildlife officials.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

Seventy-five percent of the utilities are applying sludge safely. Metro's pre-treatment for industrial wastewaters has passed all tests for heavy metals content. Public workshops and a "summit" meeting involving the public were held.

**TESTIFIED:** Ed Kenney, Yelm (pro); Janet Dykes, Onalaska (pro); Dave Crawford, Tacoma (con); Pete Machno, Metro (con); Valerie Cunningham, Cumberland (pro); Phyllis Brown, Wilson Creek (pro); Ed Thorp, Citizens for Clean Water (con)