

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6331

AS OF JANUARY 30, 1992

Brief Description: Providing a revenue source for department of health tobacco education program.

SPONSORS: Senators Pelz, M. Kreidler, Bailey, West and Oke

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Sarena Seifer (786-7417)

Hearing Dates: February 5, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in Washington. According to the State Board of Health, nearly one out of five deaths in the state is directly attributable to smoking. The 1990 State Health Report identifies a reduction in tobacco use as a priority health goal for the state and suggests various strategies for meeting this goal including the use of education and media campaigns to increase public awareness of the risks of tobacco use. The report places particular emphasis on the need to reach high-risk populations such as pregnant women, ethnic minorities and youth.

Currently, the state imposes a 34 cent per pack excise tax on cigarettes. The revenue generated from this tax is deposited into the state general fund (23 cents), the water quality account (8 cents), and the drug enforcement and education account (3 cents).

SUMMARY:

The Legislature finds that the health impact of the use of tobacco products continues to be a major problem in Washington state. The Legislature intends to aggressively address this problem through an education program designed to reduce the use of tobacco products by young people and encourage the cessation of use by those who already smoke.

A new tax upon the sale, use, consumption, handling, possession or distribution of cigarettes in the amount equal to the rate of one-half of one mill per cigarette (or, one cent per pack of cigarettes) is imposed and must be collected.

The Department of Health must implement a tobacco education program that emphasizes no new smokers, targets young people, and promotes reduction of use. This program must include an advertising component using the media to stress the dangers

and problems of tobacco use, and strive to reach all subcultures and subgroups of local communities.

A tobacco prevention account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. All receipts from the tax specified in this bill must be deposited in this account. Expenditures from the account may be authorized by the Secretary of the Department of Health or the Secretary's designee and may be used only for the tobacco education program authorized in this bill.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: requested January 27, 1992

Effective Date: July 1, 1992