

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5028**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 13, 1993**

**Brief Description:** Prohibiting additives for on-site sewage disposal systems.

**SPONSORS:** Senator Haugen

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS**

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chairman; Deccio, McCaslin, Moore, Sutherland, and Talmadge.

**Staff:** Cathy Baker (786-7708)

**Hearing Dates:** January 29, 1993; February 8, 1993

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Spanel, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Jesernig, Moyer, Quigley, Snyder, Sutherland, Talmadge, West, and Williams.

**Staff:** Martin Chaw (786-7711)

**Hearing Dates:** February 17, 1993; February 24, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

Septic tank additives are generally used to control odors in on-site sewage systems and to reduce the frequency with which tanks must be pumped out.

The additives generally contain chlorinated organic solvents, strong acids or bases, or nutrient supplements intended to enhance bacterial growth.

Some of these additives have been shown to be ineffective and may be harmful. The additives may damage drainfields and contribute to groundwater contamination. This is particularly a concern in areas with sole source aquifers.

The Department of Health is developing rules for the use of additives for on-site sewage systems. The rules ban the use of septic tank additives containing acids, bases, and chlorinated organic solvents. The proposed rules do not ban the sale or distribution of such additives.

**SUMMARY:**

After July 1, 1994 the use, sale, and distribution of septic tank additives are prohibited unless the product has been approved by the Department of Health. A product evaluation fee may be charged by the department. A \$50 civil penalty is established. The Department of Health and local health departments shall warn retailers and distributors prior to issuing civil penalties. The department is responsible for notifying major distributors and wholesalers of additives about the prohibition.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**Effective Date:** July 1, 1994

**TESTIMONY FOR (Ecology & Parks):**

Septic tank additives threaten sole source aquifers in Island County. Septic tank additives are not necessary and undermine proper functioning of septic systems. A statewide prohibition is most effective in addressing the problem.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST (Ecology & Parks):** None

**TESTIFIED (Ecology & Parks):** PRO: Karen Van Dusen, Dept. of Health; Tim McDonald, Island County Dept. of Health

**TESTIMONY FOR (Ways & Means):**

The bill represents a sound approach to management of environmentally injurious septic tank additives.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST (Ways & Means):** None

**TESTIFIED (Ways & Means):** PRO: Senator Fraser; Mark Saltzman, Dept. of Health