

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5320

C 118 L 93

SYNOPSIS AS ENACTED

Brief Description: Adopting limits on phosphorus contents in certain detergents.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Talmadge, Winsley, Deccio, Moore and Sutherland)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

BACKGROUND:

Phosphorous is a naturally occurring element that stimulates plant growth. When introduced in water, phosphorous promotes growth of weeds and algae which may degrade water quality.

Laundry and dishwashing detergents are a significant source of phosphorous. Other sources include wastewater treatment discharges, industrial discharges, agricultural run-off, and soil erosion.

Approximately 12 states and four regions have limited the amount of phosphorous allowed in laundry and dishwashing detergents. Spokane adopted an ordinance in 1990 that limits the amount of phosphorous in such detergents. King County adopted a similar ordinance in September, 1992, which bans the sale of laundry detergents containing phosphorous. In areas where phosphorous levels are reduced, wastewater treatment plants report significant cost savings.

Laundry detergents without phosphates are widely available. The cost for such detergents varies regionally but is generally competitive with detergents containing phosphorous. Dishwashing detergents with reduced levels of phosphorous are currently available but on a limited basis.

SUMMARY:

Laundry detergents containing more than .5 percent phosphorous cannot be sold or distributed for sale within the state after July 1, 1994.

Dishwashing detergents containing more than 8.7 percent phosphorous cannot be sold or distributed for sale within the state after July 1, 1994.

The phosphorous limits do not apply to the sale or distribution of detergents for commercial and industrial uses.

The Department of Ecology notifies major distributors and wholesalers of the statewide limit on phosphorous in detergents.

The Attorney General or appropriate city or county prosecuting attorney is authorized to bring an appropriate action to enjoin any violation of the phosphorous limits.

VOTES ON FINAL PASSAGE:

Senate	42	3
House	74	24

EFFECTIVE: July 25, 1993