

# **HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS**

## **HB 1436**

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**Title:** *An act relating to electronic information access for public libraries.*

**Brief Description:** *Authorizing electronic information access for public libraries.*

**Sponsors:** *Representatives Van Luven, Veloria, Keiser, Morris, Wolfe, Scott, Cole, Mason, Dunn, Quall, Lantz, Cooper, Gombosky, Murray, Costa and Anderson; by request of Washington State Library.*

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### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES**

**Meeting Date:** *February 5, 1997.*

**Bill Analysis Prepared by:** *Margaret Allen (786-7110).*

**Background:** Increasingly, information is becoming available in electronic form. It is estimated that within three years, 98 percent of all new federal documents will be available only electronically.

Libraries are considered to play an important role in making electronic information available to the public, particularly in rural areas. However, resource-sharing between libraries tends to be on an ad hoc, or regional basis. Also, there is little joint purchasing, or joint acquisitions of licenses to electronic data bases, to take advantage of economies of scale. Local public libraries report they not only need the technology to access and use electronic information, they need to train their staff in its use, so their staff can in turn train the public.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires telecommunications companies to provide discounted rates to libraries, but does not provide for library equipment or data-base acquisitions, or training.

**Summary of Bill:** The Legislature finds public access to a wide variety of information to be vital, and that public libraries are a primary source for information and educational opportunities, and serve as centers for community activity. Much information, including government information, is rapidly becoming available in electronic forms, in many cases electronic form only. Also, the Legislature finds the state library has a responsibility to encourage and facilitate access to electronic information and to help develop local library service.

The Legislature expressly intends each public library outlet to have walk-in access to electronic information through a centralized, coordinated project, for libraries to collaborate and share resources, and that access to electronic information products to be managed and promoted through a resource-sharing consortium.

Connectivity Pilot Project. The state library, in cooperation with Washington public libraries, must design and implement individualized local electronic connections in all Washington public library outlets. The number of connections is to be based on population, and expenditures are to be made for workstations, telecommunications connections, technical support, consulting, and training.

The design and implementation of the project is to take into account the following considerations: (1) stakeholder cooperation; (2) use of public and private sector expertise; (3) local circumstances, opportunities, and solutions; (4) minimizing duplication of effort through centralized and coordinated support; (5) emphasis on statewide and local benefits; and (6) technical standards developed by the K-20 telecommunications oversight and policy committee to the extent possible.

The state library must submit a report on the project to the Legislature by December 1, 1999.

The act's provisions regarding the connectivity pilot project are null and void if no funding for the project is provided in the biennial appropriations act.

Resource-Sharing Consortium: The state library, in cooperation with all public and private libraries in the state, must design and implement a pilot plan for a resource-sharing consortium. The consortium plan is to include, at a minimum, provisions for the following activities: (1) an information clearinghouse; (2) the wholesale acquisition of access to electronic information products (licensing); (3) a home page; (4) providing information on individual library subject-specialties; (5) providing information on the location of the last available copies of books and documents; (6) fast delivery of library materials by the most cost-effective method; (7) training; and (8) centralized help in locating information for individual libraries.

The plan must also include a means for the resource-sharing project to be self-supporting before July 1, 1999; the act's provisions regarding the project expire June 30, 1999.

The state library must submit a report on the project to the Legislature by December 1, 1999.

The act's provisions regarding the resource-sharing project are null and void if no funding for the project is provided in the biennial appropriations act.

**Appropriation: None.**

**Fiscal Note:** Requested January 27, 1997.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.  
However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.