

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1602

As Passed House

March 14, 1997

Title: An act relating to information on household hazardous waste or consumer product substitutes.

Brief Description: Requiring that information provided by governmental entities on household hazardous waste or consumer product substitutes be competent and reliable.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Schoesler, Huff, Lisk, Chandler, Clements and Honeyford).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/12/97, 2/26/97, 3/5/97 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/14/97, 54-40.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives McMorris, Chairman; Honeyford, Vice Chairman; Boldt; Clements and Lisk.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Conway, Ranking Minority Member; Wood, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cole and Hatfield.

Staff: Selwyn Walters (786-7117).

Background: The Legislature finds hazardous substances are a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the public, and that individuals have an inherent right to know the risks they face so that they may take informed action concerning their employment and living conditions. The Legislature has determined the establishment of a comprehensive program for the disclosure of information about hazardous substances in the workplace and the community is in the public interest, and requires the Department of Labor and Industries and the Department of Ecology to produce educational brochures and public service announcements to the public detailing information about hazardous substances.

Summary of Bill: A five-member specialty chemicals alternatives board is created which is composed of one representative each from the Department of Ecology, the extension services of Washington State University, a consumer based organization, an agricultural chemical organization, and a household consumer products organization. The purpose of the committee is to review and advise the department on the accuracy of publications on chemical alternatives.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 6, 1997.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Chemical Manufacturers Association is not trying to limit the distribution of information on consumer product substitutes, but is interested in the accuracy of the information. The publication of inaccurate information on consumer product substitutes by state, county, and local governments creates consumer confusion and may lead to injury or death of consumers. The information provided consumers by state, county, and local governments on household hazardous substances or consumer product substitutes must meet the same standard as that prescribed for the chemical manufacturing industry.

Testimony Against: The provisions of the bill would preclude government agencies from disagreeing with consumer product manufacturers and from sharing those disagreements with the public. The result of the bill will be a limit on the public's ability to make informed decisions about the products they use. The bill is not designed to promote the public good, but is designed to stifle public information sources so that only industrial information sources will be deemed acceptable.

Testified: (Pro) Terry Bedell, and Steve Gano, Chemical Specialties Manufacturers Association. (Con) Karen McDonnell; Gregg Grunenfelder, Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials; Bruce Jennings, Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides; Doris Cellarius, The Sierra Club.