

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1602

As Reported By House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

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: Representatives Schoesler, Huff, Lisk, Chandler, Clements and Honeyford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

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

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. County and local agencies also provide information on household hazardous substances and consumer product substitutes.

State, county and local governments publish public service announcements, pamphlets, brochures, flyers, and other publications to inform the public about the safe handling, use, and disposal of hazardous household substances.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Information provided by state agencies on household hazardous substances or consumer product substitutes is required to be competent and reliable.— Competent and reliable means information that is verifiable or provable.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement that information on household hazardous substances or consumer product substitutes be competent and reliable applies only to state agencies. The definition of competent and reliable is revised. The prohibition against state, county and local agencies recommending any substance for use as a pesticide that is not registered as a pesticide by the state or federal environmental protection agency is deleted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 6, 1997.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: 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 Grunfelder, Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials; Bruce Jennings, Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides; Doris Cellarius, The Sierra Club.