

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5474

As Passed Senate, March 13, 1997

Title: An act relating to recycled products.

Brief Description: Concerning standards for recycled products.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Morton, Snyder and Winsley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Environment: 2/18/97, 2/20/97 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/13/97, 29-19.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5474 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Swecker, Vice Chair; Rasmussen and Oke.

Staff: Richard Duggan (786-7414)

Background: In an effort to stimulate markets for products with recycled content and establish a leadership role for the state in utilizing recycled products, the 1991 Legislature directed the Department of General Administration, in consultation with the Department of Ecology, to adopt recycled-content product standards. Deadlines were enacted specifying paper, organic material, and latex paints for initial attention, with later deadlines on standards for other identified products. The standards were to be consistent with those adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), taking into consideration product availability, regional manufacturing capacity, and similar standards adopted in other states.

Last year, the EPA standards were adopted outright by the Legislature as the minimum standards for the state, eliminating the Department of General Administration role in setting standards and adopting a mandatory plan for increasing state agency purchases of recycled-content products.

The EPA standards have been supplemented by the Executive Order on waste reduction and recovered material utilization, E.O. 12873 issued in 1993. That order, and its subsequent revisions, establish an infrastructure for more aggressively implementing procurement guidelines and reducing waste. It also adopts a minimum content standard for printing and writing paper (30 percent postconsumer waste, effective December 31, 1998) and an alternative method of qualifying for eligibility based on content of waste materials which are byproducts of a finished product other than a paper or textile product, which would otherwise be disposed of in a landfill.

Summary of Bill: An exception to compliance with the recycled product standards is adopted for printing and writing papers manufactured at a mill with fewer than 500 employees which is located in a timber impact area, as that term is used in existing law referring to rural community assistance.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Disposal of sawdust in landfills does occur, so characterizing it as recovered material and encouraging productive use is a proper state function. Wood fiber industries in this state need help. Legislation might provide some recovery assistance in the Grays Harbor area.

Testimony Against: The primary goal of this bill is to incorporate into state law an alternative to product standards for paper based on its sawdust content. Sawdust is not a recycled byproduct, since it has never gone to landfills. Current law provides for purchases of products not meeting standards in an adequate manner. Since other paper producers are expending large sums of money to meet the standards, the bill would give an unfair advantage to a producer who qualifies for state purchases even though it can't or won't make the changes needed to become qualified in the normal manner.

Testified: Cliff Webster, John Pellegrini, Grays Harbor Paper Co. (pro); Mike Arndt, Simpson; Willie Strong, Stone Consolidated; Miles Hewitt, Boise Cascade (con); Carolyn McGreevy, James River (con); Beck Bogard, American Forest & Paper Assn., James River (con).