

SENATE RESOLUTION
1998-8731

By Senators Morton, Rasmussen, Swecker, Jacobsen and Oke

WHEREAS, The safe hauling, treatment, and disposal of medical wastes are vital public interests of the state of Washington; and

WHEREAS, This issue was last visited by the legislature in its passage of chapter 171, Laws of 1988 (Substitute Senate Bill No. 6264); and

WHEREAS, The treatment and disposal methodologies of medical wastes can have profound impacts on worker safety and the general public health; and

WHEREAS, A rational, consistent system of regulatory oversight is essential to ensuring the state's interests and protecting the public welfare; and

WHEREAS, Several different state and local government agencies have degrees of regulatory and oversight authority over medical waste collection, hauling, treatment, and disposal, which may be either overlapping or insufficient in some cases; and

WHEREAS, Incidents of exposure to contaminants from the treatment of medical waste have occurred in some types of treatment processes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Senate of the State of Washington, That the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment convene a medical waste disposal working group for the purpose of reviewing the state's policies regarding the treatment and disposal of medical wastes. The working group shall study and evaluate technologies for rendering medical waste safe for final disposal, methods of final disposal or recycling, the process for granting permits pursuant to chapter 70.95 RCW to treat and dispose of medical waste, the process for ensuring on-going compliance with the conditions of those permits, and similar statutes and rules in other states. The charge of this working group is limited to issues relating to the treatment and disposal of medical waste and does not include matters relating to the generation, collection, and handling of medical waste by medical facilities or the issuance of hauling certificates by the Utilities and Transportation Commission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment shall designate a senator as chair of the working group. The working group shall include, at a minimum, a representative from each holder of an active state-wide medical waste hauling certificate granted by the Utilities and Transportation Commission, a representative of the Washington Refuse and Recycling Association, a representative of the Washington State Labor Council, representative jurisdictional health departments, and other such elected officials or their designees as the working group chair may appoint. The working group shall seek input from the appropriate regulatory agencies and other interested parties. The staff of the Senate Committee Services shall provide staff support to the joint task force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the working group shall begin meeting no later than May 1, 1998, and shall present a final report to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment by December 1, 1998. The report shall make recommendations for any modifications in regulation and oversight of medical waste treatment and disposal and any statutory changes that the working group recommends for consideration by the Fifty-Sixth Washington State Legislature. Upon the presentation of its final report the working group shall be dissolved.