

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5433

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Environmental Quality & Water Resources, February 23, 1999

Title: An act relating to solid waste management plans.

Brief Description: Requiring comprehensive solid waste management plans to consider handling, transport, and disposal of biomedical waste.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environmental Quality & Water Resources: 2/16/99, 2/23/99 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & WATER RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5433 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Morton and Swecker.

Staff: Richard Ramsey (786-7412)

Background: Current law requires counties, in cooperation with cities within the county, to prepare a coordinated, comprehensive solid waste management plan. Biomedical waste is regulated as solid waste by the Department of Ecology and local health departments.

In order to reduce potential liability, many generators of infectious biomedical waste choose to contract for the treatment or disinfection of waste prior to disposal.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The contents of each county and city solid waste management plan are expanded to include a program for the safe handling, transport, and disposal of biomedical waste. The program specifies how biomedical waste is segregated from other solid waste. Counties and cities will address biomedical waste on the next scheduled update or revision of their solid waste management plan.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: An intent section is added to clarify that counties and cities will address biomedical waste on the next update or revision of their solid waste management plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 15, 1999.

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

Testimony For: This bill creates a key part of a comprehensive approach to dealing with medical waste. It uses an existing and accepted process. This will address the substantial amount of medical waste in the solid waste stream that is not handled by regulated carriers. By using the solid waste management plan approach it shows a sensitivity to local government concerns.

Testimony Against: Including the requirement that the plans address separation may require separate cells in municipal solid waste landfills. Instead of the solid waste management plans, these issues could be handled in Ecology's update of the minimum functional standards for landfills. The legislation should specify that addressing medical waste be incorporated into the next update of the solid waste management plan.

Testified: Lowell Haugen, Medical Waste Management Systems (pro); Jean Wessman, Washington State Association of Counties (pro with concerns); John Paul Jones, III, Washington Refuse and Recycling Association (pro with concerns); Michelle Arnold, Thurston County (pro); Scott Nelson and Mark Leary, Browning-Ferris Industries (pro); Bill White, Department of Health (pro); Laurie Davies, Department of Ecology.