

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5606

C 125 L 99

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing procedures for discipline and termination of administrative appeals judges in the environmental hearings office.

Sponsors: Senators Heavey and McCaslin; by request of Environmental Hearings Office.

Senate Committee on Judiciary

House Committee on Judiciary

Background: The Environmental Hearings Office was created in 1979 and consists of the Pollution Control Hearings Board, the Forest Practices Appeals Board, the Shoreline Hearings Board, and the Hydraulics Appeals Board. Currently, there are three administrative law judges with the Environmental Hearings Office.

The administrative appeals judges in the Environmental Hearings Office have concerns that, absent specific legislation, they could be disciplined or terminated at will, which would have a deleterious effect on their independence and impartiality. A for cause- provision would formalize long standing informal office policy and would provide parity with their counterparts in the Office of Administrative Hearings.

Summary: Judges with the Environmental Hearings Office can be terminated or disciplined only for cause. Judges who are disciplined or terminated for cause may request a written reason for the action and are entitled to review of the written decision by the Superior Court of Thurston County.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	1
House	94	0

Effective: July 25, 1999