

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5866

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Environmental Quality & Water Resources, March 2, 1999

Title: An act relating to eliminating component registration of fertilizer products.

Brief Description: Eliminating component registration of fertilizer products.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Prentice, Kline and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environmental Quality & Water Resources: 2/23/99, 3/2/99 [DPS, DNPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & WATER RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5866 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass substitute.

Signed by Senators Honeyford and Morton.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: Commercial fertilizers distributed in the state must be registered with the state Department of Agriculture. The application for registration must identify the fertilizer components and verify that the components have been registered. If a component has not been registered, then the application must include the concentration of each metal for which state standards have been established in the fertilizer component.

Commercial fertilizers must be labeled. After July 1, 1999, the label must state that information on the components of the product are available on the state's Internet website.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Fertilizer registration applicants have two options in identifying the metal components of their fertilizers. They must report the metal concentration for each component and then either: (1) report the total concentration of metals in the product, which may be stated in actual amounts or in "ranges;" or (2) submit a sample of the product along with an additional testing fee, and the Department of Agriculture tests and reports the concentrations of metals in the product.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The component registration is restored with the two additional options for registration.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1999.

Testimony For: This bill is designed to address problems identified in the implementation of the fertilizer regulation act passed last year. It does so by eliminating the option of registering a fertilizer by component. Component registration delays the process because each component is registered separately and one product may contain 20 or more registered components. Further, component registration does not provide consumers with information regarding the total metal content in a product.

Testimony Against: This bill will complicate the problem. It pushes the registration down the distribution stream and increases the number of people who will have to register. It will require manufacturers to reprint all their packaging again this year.

Testified: Mary Beth Lange, Ted Maxwell, Dept. of Agriculture (pro); Jon Stier, WashPIRG; Dan Coyne, Far West Fertilizer (con); Frank J. Warnke, Scotts (con).