

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6644

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, January 27, 2000

Title: An act relating to technical corrections to fire protection laws.

Brief Description: Making technical corrections to fire protection laws.

Sponsors: Senators Goings, Prentice, Fairley, Rasmussen, Haugen and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 1/24/2000, 1/27/2000 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6644 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Hale, Haugen, Horn and Kline.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Under the Insurance Fraud Reporting Act, an insurer that has reason to believe a reported fire loss may be of other than accidental cause must so notify the chief of the Washington State Patrol through the director of Fire Protection. The authorized agency receiving this notification may request all relevant information or evidence the insurer may have relating to criminal activity. The insurer has immunity in any civil or criminal action arising from release of the information, unless actual malice is shown.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The insurer may request that the authorized agency to which it made a report, provide relevant information on the fire loss that is in the agency's possession. The agency may release information to the insurer at the agency's discretion.

Immunity from civil or criminal action is extended to the agency complying with the insurer's request for information.

Non-mergeable double amendments to two sections of the act are reenacted.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill ensures that agencies do not release information that other laws require to be withheld.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: We need to reinstate immunity when agencies release arson information to insurance companies.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Calvin Goings, prime sponsor; Wayne Wienholz, Washington State Fire Marshal's Association (pro).