

5597

Sponsor(s): Senators Fraser, Swecker, Jacobsen, Morton, Fairley, Rasmussen and Winsley

Brief Description: Requiring occupational health standards to protect workers from airborne and waterborne pathogens.

SB 5597.E - DIGEST

(AS OF SENATE 2ND READING 3/16/99)

Finds that workers engaged in the handling, transportation, treatment, and disposal of biomedical waste may be exposed to elevated risks of contracting diseases from pathogens conveyed by air or water. These risks may be reduced by application of occupational health standards for airborne pathogens and waterborne pathogens that are comparable to those developed to protect workers from bloodborne pathogens. The legislature further finds that opportunities to improve bloodborne pathogen standards arise when product engineering improvements result in safer medical devices.

Directs the department of labor and industries to review available data, studies, hazard analyses, and other information regarding the potential for employee exposure to airborne or waterborne biological hazards in the handling, transport, treatment, and disposal of biomedical waste. Based on this review, the department shall make recommendations for appropriate action under the department's existing authority to protect workers and develop a plan for implementing the recommendations. The department shall report to the legislature its findings, recommendations, and implementation plan and recommendations for action by the legislature no later than December 1, 1999.

Directs the department to, by July 1, 1999, adopt rules revising the bloodborne pathogen standard governing occupational exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials in accordance with this act.

Expires December 31, 1999.