

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1136

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to product standards.

Brief Description: Regarding product standards.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives Schoesler, Wood, Ahern, Gombosky, Cox, Grant, Doumit, G).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 1/30/01, 2/13/01 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/27/01, 98-0.

Passed Senate: 4/6/01, 46-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the director of the Department of General Administration to adopt product standards for strawboard and strawboard products for recycled product purchases made by state agencies; and
- Adopts the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) product standards for all building products and materials, not just building insulation, unless the director makes certain findings.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives G. Chandler, Republican Co-Chair; Linville, Democratic Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; B. Chandler, Delvin, Dunshee, Grant, Hunt, Kirby, Quall, Roach, Schoesler and Sump.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

The federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act as amended requires the EPA to prepare guidelines for the procurement by federal agencies of items containing recovered materials. The guidelines adopted by the EPA designate items that are or can be made with recovered materials and whose procurement by agencies will carry out the objectives of the federal Act, as determined by the EPA.

The EPA's product standards for a number of materials have been adopted by statute for state purchases, unless the director of the Department of General Administration finds that different standards would significantly increase recycled product availability or competition. Included among these products standards are those for building insulation. These standards apply to recycled product purchasing by state agencies and may be used by local governments in making purchases.

Summary of Bill:

By July 1, 2001 the director of the Department of General Administration is required to adopt product standards for strawboard and for products made from strawboard. The straw in the strawboard is to be that produced as a by-product in the production of cereal grain or turf or grass seed. The list of products for which the product standards of the EPA are adopted by reference, unless modified as authorized, includes all building products and materials, not just building insulation.

The state entities that make their recycled product purchases in conformity with these standards now expressly includes state postsecondary educational institutions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2001.

Testimony For: (1) Since the Department of Ecology banned grass field burning as an agricultural practice, grass straw bails have been accumulating. Storage space is full. One company uses this straw to produce a product that is stronger and lighter than particle board. Although the company cannot process nearly all of the grass straw, not to mention the wheat straw, its operation represents an environmentally friendly way of disposing of the straw. Grass and wheat producers are desperately looking for ways to get rid of the straw. Help is needed to find more outlets for the product. (2) A pesticide use was denied in Oregon for controlling goat grass because burning is supposedly a practice that is available to farmers to control the weed.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In favor/Original Bill) Karl Fulgenhauer, Seeds, Inc; Rich Baden, Spokane County Conservation District; and Ray Shindler, Washington Association of Wheat Growers.