

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5240

As Passed Senate, March 12, 2001

Title: An act relating to motor vehicle emission inspection fee adjustments.

Brief Description: Providing adjustments to motor vehicle emission inspection fees.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Water (originally sponsored by Senators Regala, Swecker and Fraser; by request of Department of Ecology).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Water: 1/30/01, 2/23/01 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/12/01, 25-24.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5240 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Hale, Jacobsen, McDonald and Morton.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: Federal law requires vehicle emission testing in areas that violated carbon monoxide or ozone air quality standards. Testing is required in the urban portions of Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish and Spokane counties.

The Department of Ecology runs the motor vehicle emission inspection program; however, it is required to contract with private entities to establish and operate the vehicle inspection stations. The department is required establish the emission inspection fee by rule. The fee is statutorily capped at \$15.

The department recently solicited bids, through a request for proposals, to operate the vehicle inspection stations. The lowest bid the department received was for \$19 and the average bid was \$25. The department also solicited bids to operate the service stations at higher service levels. Those bids averaged \$28.

Summary of Bill: The statutory dollar limitation that the Department of Ecology may charge for vehicle emission testing is raised to \$26. In addition, the department's administrative expense is limited to \$3.80 per inspection.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill is needed to continue the auto emission testing program as a self-funded program. The resulting bids from a recent RFP indicate that the program cannot continue without a general fund subsidy unless the \$15 fee cap is raised. This is a no agency growth– proposal; it will simply fund the increased contractor costs of providing the testing service. This program is the most powerful and effective state tool available to address air pollution in our state.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Debbie Regala, prime sponsor; Mike Ryherd, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (pro); Mary Burg, Department of Ecology (pro); Jim Nolan, PSCAA (pro); Steve Gerritson, Sierra Club (pro); Gary Smith, Small business advocate (pro).