

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5933

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 27, 2001

Title: An act relating to reducing exposure in the home to carcinogens and allergens.

Brief Description: Reducing exposure in the home to carcinogens and allergens.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Thibaudeau, Deccio, Fraser and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/26/01, 2/27/01 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa, Fraser and Winsley.

Staff: Chelsea Buchanan (786-7446)

Background: Studies have shown that exposure to toxic pollutants is often many times higher in indoor air than outdoor air. Toxins that are tracked or originate inside a home remain in the air at a higher concentration than outside and take longer to degrade.

Household dust is a major source of toxins, allergens, bacteria, and molds which have been linked to disease including asthma and cancer. Young children are at higher risk of these toxins as their bodies are smaller and still developing, and as they are more likely to ingest dust. However, there are effective cleaning, design, and remodeling methods that greatly reduce these hazards.

Although it is not required by law to do so, the Department of Health (DOH) currently has informational materials available through local health districts and on its webpage pertaining to indoor air quality, conducts education related to pesticides, and is partners with the American Lung Association's Master Home Environmentalist Program. Concerns exist that people in general are not aware of poor indoor air quality as a significant health hazard, especially to small children.

Summary of Bill: DOH is required to develop and distribute informational materials pertaining to such indoor air pollutants such as smoke, dust mites, mold, pesticides, and carcinogens. The materials must include recommendations on cleaning methods and other ways to reduce exposure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Many people, especially children, are increasingly susceptible to allergies, asthma, and respiratory diseases, which could be linked to indoor air pollutants. Children are at the greatest risk since they are indoors more often and play on the floor. The Department of Health needs to provide more current information and a greater amount of information on indoor air quality. Education in this regard is cost effective, since it can prevent ailments and federal and private money is available. The Department of Health supports the concept of the bill, and will continue to provide this type of education and will work to make it more user-friendly.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor (pro); Patty Hayes, Department of Health (pro); John Roberts, League of Women Voters (pro); Nick Federici, American Lung Association (pro).