SENATE BILL REPORT
SCR 8426

As of February 6, 2002

Brief Description: Creating the Joint Select Committee on Indoor Mold Contamination.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Winsley, Thibaudeau, McAuliffe, Franklin, Fairley and Fraser.

Brief History:
   Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/7/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

Background: Molds, part of the fungi kingdom, can grow in moist indoor environments. For example, molds can grow on wood, ceiling tiles, wallpaper, paints, carpet, and insulation. People become exposed to indoor molds, either by direct contact with mold on surfaces, or through aerosolized mold spores or mold toxins.

Molds may adversely impact human health, including allergic reactions, asthma, eye and skin irritation, and immune suppression. Currently, public health practice recommends limiting exposure to indoor molds by cleaning up existing mold problems and controlling further mold growth by addressing moisture problems.

There are no federal or state regulations or standards regarding what constitutes a safe level of mold contaminants. Mold problems have been identified in Washington homes and schools, as well as other buildings.

Summary of Bill: A Joint Select Committee on Indoor Mold Contamination is created. The committee must examine the health effects of exposure to molds, review the actions other states have taken to address this public health threat, and make recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor regarding ways that the Legislature and the private sector can work cooperatively to reduce the risks associated with exposure to molds.

The committee consists of four voting members, one from each major caucus of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Secretary of the Department of Health is a nonvoting member of the committee. The committee must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by January 1, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.