

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5271

As Passed House:

June 11, 2003

Title: An act relating to claims for hearing loss due to occupational noise exposure.

Brief Description: Regarding industrial insurance hearing loss claims.

Sponsors: By Senators Honeyford, Hewitt and Parlette; by request of Department of Labor & Industries.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor:

Second Special Session

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 6/11/03, 69-21.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires industrial insurance claims for hearing loss due to occupational noise exposure to be filed either within two years of the last injurious exposure or one year after the bill's effective date, whichever is later.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7103).

Background:

Under the Industrial Insurance Act, workers who, in the course of employment, are injured or suffer disability from an occupational disease receive certain benefits. Claims for industrial injuries and occupational diseases must be filed within specific time periods.

For an industrial injury, the claim must be filed within one year after the day the injury occurred. For an occupational disease, the claim must be filed within two years following the date the worker is advised by a physician, in writing, of the existence of the disease and the right to file a claim for benefits. The physician must file the notice

with the Department of Labor & Industries (Department), and the Department must send copies of the notice to the worker and any self-insurer.

The Department must provide certain devices necessary to treat an injured worker, including hearing aids. These devices continue to be provided or replaced after treatment is complete.

Summary of Bill:

The statute of limitations applicable to filing industrial insurance claims for hearing loss due to occupational noise exposure is modified. The claim must be filed within the later of two years after the last injurious exposure to occupational noise in covered employment or one year after the bill's effective date. If a claim is not timely filed, the worker may receive medical aid benefits, such as hearing aids, but not other types of compensation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.