
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SSB 6636

Brief Description: Regulating the disposal of animals.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen, Swecker, Jacobsen, Brandland, Doumit, Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Eide, Fraser, Regala, Shin, Prentice, Honeyford, Kline, Thibaudeau, Poulsen, Spanel, Franklin, Keiser, Winsley, Oke and Esser).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a multi-agency work group to study animal carcass disposal regulations.
- Allows the Department of Ecology, the Department of Health, and the Department of Agriculture to adopt standards for animal carcass disposal.

Hearing Date: 2/20/04

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The handling of animal carcasses is generally regulated by both the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Agriculture (WSDA). A rule adopted by the DOH requires that the carcass of a dead animal must be incinerated, or buried in at least two feet of dirt. This burial location must be at least 100 feet from water, and the burial must occur within 24 hours of death. Carcasses of diseased animals must be incinerated or buried enveloped in unslaked lime. (WAC 16.68.020).

Additionally, a state law administered by the WSDA requires that any animal that dies of a disease be buried at least three feet deep. Animals found dead are presumed to have died from disease (RCW 16.68.020). Unlike the DOH rule, this statute does not provide for the incineration of diseased carcasses.

Any disposal of animal carcasses in a landfill must be done in accordance with minimum factional standards adopted by the Department of Ecology (DOE).

Summary of Bill:

Work Group

The DOH, WSDA, and DOE, in collaboration with local health departments, other state and federal agencies, university scientists, and affected constituency groups, are required to form an interagency work group to develop a state policy on the disposal of animal carcasses. The work group is required to review existing carcass disposal rules for their adequacy in protecting public health and welfare, and examine the possible vectors of disease transmission.

The work group must deliver a report to the Legislature by December 15, 2004 that identifies any amendments to state statutes that are necessary for the correction of inconsistent policies. The work group must also include an educational component that provides information to governments, animal owners, and the public regarding the proper disposal of animal carcasses.

Agency Rulemaking

The DOH, WSDA, and DOE are all provided with specific rulemaking authority. The DOH is authorized to adopt rules outlining the proper treatment and disposal of any animal that has been tested positive for transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. The DOE may adopt minimum standards for landfills that accept animal carcasses, and the WSDA may adopt rules outlining the proper disposal of livestock carcasses. Prior to adopting new rules, all three agencies must consult with the work group created in the act.

A violation of any of the rules regarding the disposal of animal carcasses is a misdemeanor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.