
SENATE BILL 5495

State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Senators Keiser, Fraser and Kline

Read first time 01/28/2003. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating the environmental health tracking
2 system; and adding a new chapter to Title 70 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds and declares that:

5 (1) There currently exist several health and environmental data
6 bases maintained by the state. However, there is little or no
7 coordination between the use and analysis of these data as they pertain
8 to environmental health issues or accessibility of this information by
9 interested parties and researchers. In its fight against chronic
10 diseases, including birth defects, that are related to the environment,
11 the state must give communities and public health professionals solid,
12 reliable information, which is the most basic tool with which to
13 undertake the prevention of these diseases.

14 (2) Analysis of available data used to track and monitor chronic
15 diseases is critical to all of the following:

16 (a) Knowing where and how to put in place the most effective
17 strategies to prevent diseases;

18 (b) Assessing the contribution of diseases to disabilities and
19 premature mortality;

- 1 (c) Measuring the effectiveness of prevention strategies; and
2 (d) Generating hypotheses that may lead to new scientific knowledge
3 about the causes of, and most effective ways to fight, chronic
4 diseases.

5 (3) State government agencies and universities are the appropriate
6 and necessary institutions to examine whether or not, and, if so, the
7 extent to which, past environmental exposures might increase the risk
8 of chronic diseases, including, but not limited to, birth defects,
9 diabetes, heart disease, thyroid disease, reproductive disorders,
10 cancer, asthma and other respiratory conditions, Parkinson's disease,
11 Alzheimer's disease, and other neurologically degenerative diseases.

12 (4) The initial investment to establish the environmental health
13 tracking system, including an analysis of infrastructure to develop
14 preventive strategies, would constitute a small fraction of the annual
15 costs of controlling chronic diseases in the state.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** It is the intent of the legislature in
17 creating the environmental health tracking system to form a partnership
18 to do all of the following:

19 (1) Provide a continually updated data base, with linkages to the
20 survey, biomonitoring, and disease data collected under section 3 of
21 this act, in order to assess the impact of environmental contaminants
22 on the human body;

23 (2) On an ongoing basis, track and evaluate a variety of chronic
24 diseases in relation to environmental exposures, including state and
25 local data on actual incidences of chronic disease;

26 (3) Make the data available to the public in an accessible and
27 useful format; and

28 (4) Ultimately provide the data to the relevant board, division, or
29 office within the department of health, the department of ecology, the
30 department of labor and industries, and the University of Washington
31 school of public health for the development of appropriate preventive
32 strategies.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The environmental health tracking system
34 is established in the department of health. The purpose of the
35 environmental health tracking system is to monitor environmental
36 exposures and chronic diseases affecting residents of the state. The

1 department of health is directed to cooperate with the department of
2 ecology, the department of labor and industries, and the University of
3 Washington school of public health in establishing the environmental
4 health tracking system.

5 (2) The objectives of the environmental health tracking system are
6 as follows:

7 (a) To track and evaluate a variety of chronic diseases in relation
8 to environmental exposures;

9 (b) To allow both government and university investigators and
10 public health officials to assess the impact of environmental
11 contaminants on the human body; and

12 (c) To provide information to the department of health, the
13 department of ecology, the department of labor and industries, and the
14 University of Washington school of public health for the development of
15 appropriate preventive strategies.

16 (3) To examine the relationships between chronic diseases and the
17 environment, using, to the maximum extent possible, existing health and
18 environmental data, the department of health, based upon the
19 recommendations of the working group established under subsection (4)
20 of this section, shall:

21 (a) On an ongoing basis, survey a cross section of the overall
22 population of the state, including, to the extent possible, regional
23 data to assess geographic variation, including chronically ill
24 patients, and their environmental exposures;

25 (b) On a continuing and periodic basis, conduct biomonitoring for
26 a cross section of the population, including, to the extent possible,
27 regional data to assess geographic variation; and

28 (c) On an ongoing basis, link data created by the surveys and
29 biomonitoring activities to other health and environmental data bases,
30 such as birth certificates, neonatal blood tests, records of hospital
31 admissions, records of emergency room visits, and mortality data.

32 (4) On or before September 1, 2004, the department of health, in
33 consultation with the department of ecology, the department of labor
34 and industries, and the University of Washington school of public
35 health, shall create a working group of technical experts, including
36 experts who have knowledge of the sensitivity and exposure of children,
37 women of child-bearing age, seniors, and disparately affected
38 populations to environmental hazards, to do all of the following:

1 (a) Develop possible approaches to implementing the environmental
2 health tracking system, including an estimated cost for each approach;

3 (b) On or before September 1, 2005, prepare and submit a report to
4 the department of health, the department of ecology, the department of
5 labor and industries, the University of Washington school of public
6 health, and the legislative committees with jurisdiction on the
7 possible approaches to implementing an environmental health tracking
8 system for the state; and

9 (c) Determine the health and environmental criteria needed to
10 examine the relationship between chronic diseases, including birth
11 defects, and the environment.

12 (5) On or before January 1, 2006, the department of health shall
13 adopt and implement the approach recommended by the working group that
14 it determines most closely meets the purpose, objectives, and
15 requirements of this section, after opportunity for public comment.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The department of ecology shall cooperate
17 with state agencies and universities to provide all information and
18 other relevant and necessary expertise to meet the requirements of
19 section 3 of this act.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The department of labor and industries shall
21 cooperate with state agencies and universities to provide all
22 information and other relevant and necessary expertise to meet the
23 requirements of section 3 of this act.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The University of Washington school of
25 public health shall participate in the creation of the environmental
26 health tracking system working group under section 3 of this act.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Nothing contained in this chapter may be
28 construed to supersede any confidentiality provisions of any law.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 7 of this act constitute
30 a new chapter in Title 70 RCW.

--- END ---